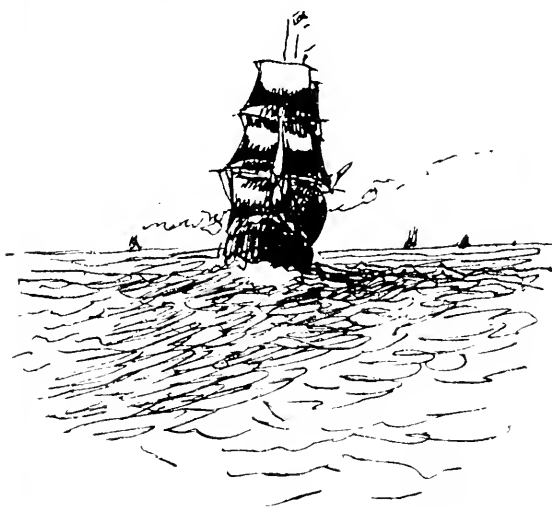


G.G. MCCRAE

HIS BOOK.



To R. Robertson

in memory of my Father
George Gaden R. R. -
1832~~4~~ - 1927.

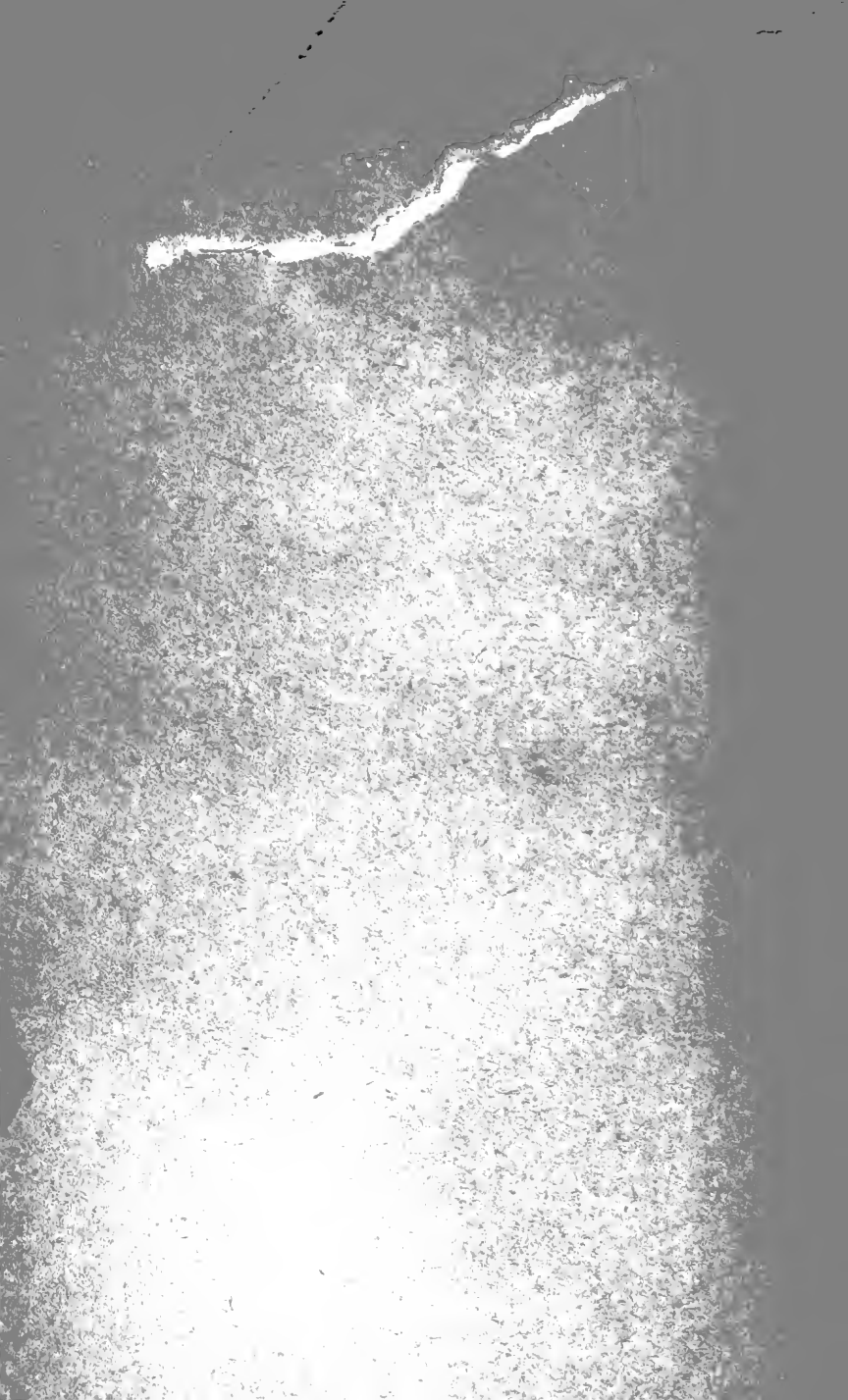
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JOHN ROUS



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PROPOSAL OF CAPTAIN WILLOUGHBY TO DAME
DOROTHY TRUMPINGTON.

JOHN ROUS

A Queen Anne Story in an Australian Setting

Showing in simple words the passage
of a not uneventful life animated
throughout by an inborn and un-
conquerable love of the sea and a
most ardent patriotism.

By George Gordon McCrae

Author of "The Man in the Iron Mask," "A
Rosebud from the Garden of the Taj," &c. &c.

Illustrations by Lionel Lindsay



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THE SPECIALTY PRESS PTY. LTD.
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To
Agnes Embling

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PROLOGUE.

"BLACK THURSDAY."

We are three weary men together on the Narangan out-station, just returned from beating out a fire that we had ourselves kindled in self-defence.

Short of meat, for the harness-cask is low; short of flour, seeing that the long-expected dray has not yet arrived from town; short of water, since the so-called spring that percolates into the Corroboree waterhole has given out; and, need one add it? short of temper also, by reason of the swarming flies, in which we realize one at least of the plagues of Egypt; while the thermometer, the only scientific instrument we possess—a gift from my old friend Vincent at the home-station—registers 124° in the shade.

Notwithstanding the extreme heat, a clear, red fire is glowing in the depths of the bush chimney, and the big, black iron kettle, filled with ready-sugared "post and rail" is flapping its lid up and down spasmodically as the confined steam essays to make its escape. Close up to the kettle, with his nose between his extended fore-paws and blinking lazily at the embers, lies "Darkie," the station cat, a creature who could make himself comfortable anywhere this side of Tartarus.

"Big Bill," the splitter and fencer, the strong man of our little party, lies in his bark bunk against the wall of gaping slabs; one leg hanging over the side, his elbows out and wide apart, with both brawny hands clasped together, forming a firm but knotty pillow for the back of his head.

Bill is not exactly the model a sculptor might choose for a Hercules; indeed there is nothing heroic about the fellow except his size—the head far from classical, the nose simply a lump of red putty, and the eyes (to use an expression of Harry the cook) not mates. Vincent once in merry mood had dubbed him Quin-

bus Flestrin, but the sobriquet somehow failed to stick, and how indeed could it be expected it should among a set of rough station hands who had never read of Mr. Lemuel Gulliver, of Nottinghamshire, nor even heard of his literary sponsor, the witty Dean of St. Patrick's? We came more readily to recognise Harry's nomenclature; so, with us he remained Big Bill or Boomer Bill to the end of the chapter.

Now, if our Big Bill was snub-nosed, black-haired and swarthy, Harry was a man of a very opposite appearance and nature—fair and florid, not too tall, with a very decided Roman nose, and a pair of clear and really clever blue eyes.

One of the best of all excellent cooks and hut-keepers on our side of civilization was Harry. But how Harry, with all his natural cleverness, ever drifted into this hut-keeping business, nobody knew and nobody seemed to care. Semi-lazy no doubt; fond of good things certainly, and extremely (what Big Bill called) conversable, he loved at once to rule the roost and the yarn. Harry is discoursing to us learnedly (yet in the learning-made-easy style) on the origin of bushfires, and is weighing the several probabilities in favour of pipe-ashes, broken bottles acting as burning glasses, and spontaneous combustion of damp vegetable matter, respectively.

The air about us as he talks is getting bluer and bluer, and more vaporous; the sun shorn of his rays stands a huge globe of red hot copper in a leaden sky, whose surbase is a burning horizon, and there is a powerful flavor of smouldering gum leaves on every side. By this time Harry has poured out our tea into the pannikins, and by dint of capsizing it with frequent dexterity from one pannikin into another, and so on back again, succeeds at last in getting it sufficiently cool for our longing lips and parched throats. We drink, and drink, and drink. Even Big Bill, hauling up his pendant limb slouches out of the bunk and taking a seat on the bottom of a reversed bucket, swallows like a young maelstrom all the little dancing and whirling bits of "post and rail" that permeate the draught; then, holding out his drinking vessel of battered and blackened tin, demands yet more.

We drink—our foreheads and the backs of our rough hands suddenly starting out in dew-drops at every pore, and as Harry, who has never once drawn rein during his operations, assures us of a coming coolness, we begin already to experience it in a most delightful manner; and what was but just now an oppressive and stifling hot wind is transformed through the magic of evaporation into a deliciously cool breeze.

We overhaul our pipes, and there is quite a solemn little ceremony of cutting and rubbing up our black tobacco, with a view to the crowning luxury of a good smoke. This, once fairly started, the conversation becomes jerky and interjectional. We relapse awhile into silence, which is at length broken by Boomer Bill, who, looking two ways for Sunday (as Harry phrases it) out of those peerless orbs of his, exclaims with a whole string of oaths, that he hopes he may be this'd and that'd, etc., if he does not hear the sound of (adjective) hoofs approaching.

Nor is our saturnine mate in the smallest degree mistaken, for our own ears speedily confirm the correctness of his.

I pull myself together, and getting on my legs go to the door, whence I clearly make out (though still at a considerable distance) a dark little figure on horseback, just above the first slip-panel, and cantering towards us with that incomparably graceful abandon of which only a young blackfellow is capable.

He sits lightly, but quite as a part of the horse, his legs, however, swinging loosely from the knees, and thumping against the animal's ribs as he comes swinging along up the track towards the hut. Blest if here isn't little Yarat himself! cries Harry. Wonder what wind it may be that blows him this way? Wants an (adjective) long drink, cries Bill, and ——— if he shant have it, too! Suiting the action to the word, he pours out a pannikinful of our scalding nectar, transferring as before described the contents continuously from one vessel to another in order to achieve the requisite degree of coolness, and all without spilling a single drop. That's the style, mate! remarks Harry approvingly. Bill don't

forget the time Yarat hauled him out of Paddy's Creek three parts drowned in the D.T., but, all the same, I want to know what brings the black boy this way to-day.

It is news! said I. I can tell it from his form, from his seat in the saddle, and the go in him, for by this time I could distinguish that he urged the jaded beast on by pressing his knees inwards, and also by occasional kicks with his bare heels against its ribs; his two arms and hands being well extended in front of him holding and shaking the loose reins.

Before he had time to reach the door of the hut we were all out to reconnoitre.

Hallo! Yarat; where from to-day? inquires Harry.

He does not reply immediately, but pulling up sits motionless in the saddle while the horse's flank-ribs rise and fall with his hurried breathings.

We gather around him and fancy we read disaster in his dark countenance and slow manner.

Though living among us from his childhood he still retains (like all his race) an instinctive aversion to be the first to speak on meeting (even with acquaintances), and Bill, who was as Bohemian in grain as Yarat himself, ran in for the pannikin of tea as a welcome to the boy, and also as a preliminary to speech in the way of clearing the throat. Yarat drained it to the bottom at a draught as he sat with his feet still dangling loosely in the stirrups, and handing back the pannikin vouchsafed to remark, All about big fellow fire.

Big fellow fire! I believe you, exclaimed Harry. This is too much like it hot, for Sun!

Ye-es, drawls the little black stockrider, sliding slowly over the horse's side on to the ground, and hitching up the waistband of a very dingy pair of trousers, two sizes too long for him.

All about big fellow fire! Axleford alonga one Tree Hill Paddy's Plain; then, pull away, long way alonga Hungry Jackson paddock. Jackson woolshed all gone. Three fellow hut alonga Donkey Flat all gone! Mas'r Vincent hut baal burn. Big one Mas'r (I expect) burn him house this time. . . . I say! . . . You got him bacca? What! Head station burnt out, too; Yes! Mas'r's super' mine bin

tell me. Best way you put him saddle on Bob. Pull away alonga Narangan bring up three fellow men. You megalite? With these words Yarat coiled himself on his hams (pipe in mouth), under the shadow of our bark eaves, while I loosened Bob's girths and got him a bite of oats from a small quantity we had by us, tied up in the corner of an old sack; and Harry, with something like a sigh at the idea of expending any more of our reduced stock of water unless upon a Christian, set some before the animal in a rusty old tin dish. We were too full of our own thoughts to say much, and as soon as Bob had been somewhat refreshed we fastened up the door of the hut, after putting out the remains of the fire in the chimney, and set off ride-and-tie three men and the black boy for Man-o'-War Rous's, as the folks hereabouts styled the Head Station.

When I say we all rode and tied, I am not quite correct, for Big Bill, who was too heavy for Bob, chose to foot it the whole way (some six miles), and came in very shortly after ourselves. During the last mile and a half we found ourselves running almost parallel with the line the fire had made for itself, and as we advanced still farther we had to cross a belt of burnt country where we were continually stumbling over the blackened and ashy remains of knots of tussock grass.

The bark of the surrounding timber was still on fire, and everywhere before and behind we heard the crash of falling trees; the most of these besides being old were hollow and dry, and some of the bigger ones still standing were on fire from the roots and quite forty feet upwards, belching forth volumes of flame at that elevation like so many factory chimneys.

As we drew nearer, perspiring at every pore, and blackened all over through contact with charred bark and grass, and half blinded by the thick smoke that rolled along under the hillside, we perceived rods upon rods of the new fence down, and much of this that lay on the ground represented only by masses of charcoal. The yards, which lay against a thick scrub on the verge of a gully, had two sides totally destroyed, and the carcasses of some half-dozen hobbled working bullocks, which had been roasted alive, were barely

recognizable, though the sickening odour of burning horns and hides still hung heavy on the air.

The big barn was one heap of ashes; the stacks and ricks of oats had vanished. Machinery, ploughs and harrows presented a pitiable spectacle.

Smoke continued to obscure the air on all sides; and, often as we stumbled along, the parrots, wattle-birds, and paroquets fell thumping on to the ground at our feet, suffocated by dozens, while small brush kangaroos, driven from their ferny lairs by the advancing wave of flame, lay scorched and half-roasted along the track. The only creatures that rose superior to the elements, and even seemed exultant in the general conflagration, were the eaglehawks, which alternately soared aloft and poised themselves ere swooping down through the stifling vapours upon the steaming quarry.

The big horse paddock was one blackened waste; and as we cleared this and approached the little colony of huts that marked the actual homestead, it dawned upon us that we were too late to be of any practical assistance. Most of the buildings were roofless and completely gutted: the only one that had escaped with nothing worse than a severe scorching was Vincent's little but-an'-ben, which stood on a tolerably clear space on the way down to the springs, where the well-marked water-sledge track, and two or three intersecting paths, had combined to save the old man's roof and all his little worldly effects beneath it; but as we continued our way along the track towards what we used to call "the Big House," it became painfully apparent that every effort made to preserve it had been but in vain. The roof had fallen in, and the pretty cream-coloured chimneys, now dark and disfigured, stood up in the midst of the wreck; the most melancholy-looking objects imaginable. The deep, dark verandah was one ruin, and all the richly luxuriant mat of honeysuckle and roses, which had once overshadowed it, now curled up and withered into something past recognition. The garden beds were trampled down and destroyed by the feet of those bent on saving what they might; and what was once a regular English lawn, with its daisies and clover, looked as if it had been charged over by a squadron

of horse. In the midst of this stood a huge pile of broken and disfigured furniture, an iron safe, hangings hastily torn from the poles, damaged pictures, and heaps of handsomely bound books, in every direction. I ventured into the house, the stout hardwood framing of which was still smouldering and smoking; but speedily retreated with a view to my own personal safety, and seeing also that nothing remained within that was worth the rescue.

Vincent appeared upon the scene just as I withdrew; his face grimy as that of a foundryman or stoker, and with great holes burned here and there in his shirt and trousers.

.

I shall remember this Thursday, the sixth of February, old man, to my dying day! exclaimed Vincent, as he grasped my hand under the burning eaves.

And I, too! replied I, though not exactly in the thick of it, like yourself. . . . but, the young ladies, and Master Blake, and the Captain? Oh! the family is safe enough by this time, over at Hatherley's *They* have lost their stacks and stables, but the homestead is secure. . . . What the Captain will think or say when he comes to hear of all this, I do not dare to conceive. Didn't you know that he had been away in Melbourne these ten days over that boundary case with Watkins?

Away! Then it will come upon him like a thunder-clap. "Aye! You may well say that, for though he will be heartily thankful that Miss Sylvia and Miss Dorothy and Master Blake are none the worse, save they have no clothes except what they stand upright in. I can tell you the Captain has lost Lares and Penates, besides heirlooms and relics, that will go nigh to break his heart. There's the old Trafalgar sword of his father, lying on the lawn there; no better now than a bit of hoop-iron, with pictures of notable sea-fights wherein his ancestors bore brave parts, and gained undying laurels. His saucy old 'Calliope,' his own first command, the same that used to hang over the mantelpiece in the breakfast room, irretrievably ruined, and all his South Sea idols and weapons perished. But what concerns him most, and, if I might

say so, me, too, is the big safe of which he has the key with him in town. It *was* in a 'warm corner,' I can tell you, and red hot (one side of it) and no mistake! Jackson got terribly burned about the hands and arms in prizing it out. . . . I wonder how it goes with the contents? . . . To my certain knowledge there is a book in one of the drawers that the Captain would not part with . . . not for its weight in gold. And I feel, too, that if that book were mine, and ruined, it would drive me crazy with mortification. Fortunately, there is a copy made; so, if part, or even the whole happens to be destroyed, *there* is the transcript still." "But is the transcript safe?" I inquired. "Safe *now*," said he; "but I trembled for it this morning as it lay in the big sea-chest under my bunk in the hut over there."

The sea, the storm, have spared me; the bullets have whistled harmless past me in action, and now, the fire has swept over me and my small possessions and done me no harm. Yet the Captain, who has a bigger stake in the world than I, has been twice nearly drowned, three times wounded, and is now next to utterly ruined by fire!

These are mysteries past my comprehension.

Why *I* should be saved, apparently to do no good in the land; and he be so buffeted about, upon whom depend so many lives and such interests.

.

Ah! You forget, cried I (smiling in spite of myself). Have you not been preserved specially in order to transcribe that precious volume? Well! you laugh, rejoined he, but there is a whole world in that remark of yours; though you make it all unwittingly.

.

Next night when we were somewhat refreshed and recovered from the fatigues incidental to the fight with fire, Vincent, who had taken me into his own hut to stop with him, began to recount from memory the extent of the Captain's losses, and displayed (though unconsciously), so intimate a knowledge of family history and family property as fairly to astonish me. Yet

I find, after due consideration, that after all there was no great ground for wonder.

Vincent's memory was acknowledged on all hands to be something extraordinary, as amazing probably as his information was extensive and varied. He possessed a certain knowledge of a strange kind for a blue-shirted rouse-about-hand in the far bush. He was a walking Peerage, Baronetage, and Landed Gentry Directory in one; could tell you (at once) the names and titles of all the principal noblemen in the United Kingdom, who the Marquis of this or that was, what was the second title; whom he had married, how many sons he had, whether they were in the Royal Navy or the Guards; Pages of Honour to Royalty, etc. And this special form of knowledge had often placed Vincent in the position of referee in disputes as to who was who, whether Viscount Dush was of the "ancienne noblesse," or simply the descendant of an ennobled diplomatist of no particular origin, whether it was actually true that my Lord Asterisk's mother had run off with the coachman, etc. . . .

I am generally cool, said Vincent in reply to a remark of mine touching presence of mind in one of our little discussions; but, where a man has to act out as well as to think of three or four things together and at the same time, distraction is unavoidable.

Now that I sit here with you quietly over our pipes and tea, I begin to recall treasures lost in that big fire of yesterday which had completely snipped my memory on the first count. . . . Now I could almost make out an entire inventory. Well, said I, *imprimis*. Ah! came the reply. A most unhappy, an almost unspeakable category. It sends one right off at a tangent to ancient Carthage with Pius Aeneas reclining heart-sick and weary in Dido's presence as she demands of the wandering prince the story of the Fall of Troy."

"Infandum (*amice*, I shall put it in your case) *jubes renovare dolorem*."

How will that suit, eh? To a T, replied I, and I am fully convinced of it, you would have been all there with a phrase, a quotation, or a parallel instance, even while dragging the Captain's Penates from under the blazing roof." He smiled acquiescence,

but gave me to understand that it was the *occasion* which invariably suggested the quotation; and went on (as was his wont) to disclaim any particular credit for remembering an apposite text.

In the first place, then, a half-length life-size portrait in oils of Dame Dorothy Trumpington, the captain's maternal ancestress, a woman of rare beauty and no small attainments.

To think only that this should have been handed down from father to son, from Charles the Second's time to the present reign, and after *all*, to be blistered up and burned and destroyed in the Australian bush!

Miss Dorothy, too (I had heard it was to have been her inheritance one day) will doubtless become resigned to the loss after a week or so.

But it is a totally different affair with the Captain, who not only prized the picture for all its countless associations, but regularly worshipped it into the bargain. I am by no means certain that it wasn't my own admiration for this wonderful portrait of his lovely progenitress that won for me much of that personal favour I have enjoyed at his hands.

It was a thing (if it be not a crime to speak of that as a *thing*), which arrested your attention on the spot as you entered the room, the eyes following you, go where you might: those wondrous eyes took varying shades of blue as they concentrated themselves upon you; and there was a velvety dimple in the cheek and such an exquisitely rendered little brown mole on the neck that made the picture supremely natural as well as altogether agreeable.

I myself have some associations connected with Dame Dorothy's picture as she used to look down upon me standing awaiting my orders at the hands of her gallant descendant, and indeed I am not ashamed to own it.

"This loss of Dame Dorothy has made a hole in my existence that nothing can ever fill up.

"Then, there was a magnificent line-engraving of General-Admiral Blake, in hat and feather, and bright steel breastpiece, with scarf complete; also a companion-engraving by one of the very first Amsterdam artists, representing Van Tromp, in full war paint, surrounded by all sorts of old-world naval emblems.

These pictures the captain always held to be simply priceless.

They hung in black-oak frames in his writing-room. A portrait of H.M.S. "Devonshire," to which an ancestor of his was once appointed; also a portrait of that same ancestor, Nicholas John Rous, a man of some natural shrewdness as well as the victim of many vicissitudes; portraits, too, of Magalhaens, Tasman, Dampier, Dirk Hartog, and Torres; also a grand chart of Nieuw Hollandt, with Van Diemen's Land adhering (in statu quo ante Bass).

Captain Rous's walls formed a small picture gallery, replete with the story of his ancestors, their aspirations, pursuits and victories, and these were in themselves an education to his children.

Master Blake has grown up, as his fathers did before him, under the immediate influence of these family pictures; so, Miss Dorothy and Miss Sylvia, they are well seised in all points of a most honourable family history, and their whole nature is saturated with it; but I myself really feel a pang to think that the next generation of these genuine English gentlemen and ladies will only know the gallery by tradition.

.

Order was brought out of chaos and confusion. Tents were rigged, and we soon had a long-ridged barrack-hut in a fair state of forwardness for the men, who went about their usual avocations as before, under the directions of Vincent and the overseers.

The furniture and the remains of the more precious things were safely housed, and a temporary building to accommodate the master and his family was erected in the garden at a short distance from the site of the old home.

But when the Captain came up from town he was an altogether altered man. Warm-tempered and somewhat autocratic, as a man accustomed to walk the weather side of his own quarter-deck is apt to be, he used to assume certain stand-off airs which were not so well understood by the neighbours as they were among his own men, who were in truth sincerely attached to him, but there was at the same time a

bluff heartiness and sailor-like jollity which more than made up for the quarterdeck humours.

Now all his jollity was gone, and with it much of that sternness and hauteur which it had gone so far to redeem. It would be exaggeration to say that his hair turned suddenly white—he was an iron-grey man ever since first I came to serve him—but now he grew noticeably whiter every day. His eye had lost its fire and, even when he applied himself to business, it was in a calm, mechanical kind of way, and with an unquestioning acquiescence in the suggestions of his advisers, singularly at variance with his older manner of inviting and entering into discussion and debate. Captain Rous had been for several years a widower, and the loss of his wife (to whom he was fondly attached), was the first cloud that darkened the sky of his Australian existence; but he revived his lost happiness only under another form in the society of his daughters, Dorothy and Sylvia, two charming girls, both already arrived at womanhood, and brought up carefully and tenderly, as a gentleman's daughters ought to be. Sylvia (the dark one) painted in water colours with true feeling and a remarkable fidelity to nature; while Dorothy (the fair and dimpled beauty) was a most accomplished musician. Neither of them had enjoyed the full advantages of continental travel; nothing, in fact, save a scamper through France and Italy with their mother when they were years younger and visiting their father by the way as the "Phaëton" lay at Naples. But, that they had both derived a certain degree of inspiration from the sun and atmosphere of Italy, I cannot doubt. They were then at the impressionable age when one sees most chiefly the brighter side of things. So the Italian seas and skies and scenery fairly entered into and became part of their existence.

Then their mother, who taught them, was an enthusiastic musician who spoke both French and Italian with perfect confidence and fluency. It was to her also that Sylvia owed her taste for painting as well as for much of the proficiency she attained in that art.

Young herself when her father consented to her marriage with Mr. Rous (he was only a lieutenant then), her children were born ere the hey-day of her

youth was completely over, and, as a consequence, when the girls grew up, they came to regard her more in the light of an elder sister than otherwise. This, where the mother is richly endowed with good temper, fine sense, and natural amiability, is surely one of the very happiest phases of family life. Another grand feature in their education was the position of their father, not position in the coarser and more vulgar sense of the word, which may signify wealth or mock aristocracy with all its hollow and senseless surroundings, but a position of authority conferred by rank and right.

They had often seen him at Castellamare on his own quarter-deck, where he reigned supreme, and had intuitively remarked how well he earned and how loftily he repaid the respect due both to his rank and himself, nor could they but observe also his gallant and dignified, yet easy bearing, society ashore, where he looked every inch an officer in full command. When I say they were as proud of him as it was possible for daughters to be, and respected without absolutely fearing him, I believe I sum up the situation quite correctly, and they were as proud of him in his suit of grey tweed (his only wear at Mirambina), as even they had been when arrayed in all the adventitious glory of epaulettes at divisions or quarters on board the brave old "Phaëton" at Naples.

To see the girls but quite recently in the Mirambina garden on a summer's morning, the one leaning on his shoulder while the other decorated him with a little button-hole flower, was to see a truly delightful picture in one of the fairest settings imaginable; and, viewing them thus, one could not but reflect with all the pain that is born of experience on the various possibilities of life. Marriage, with all its uncertainties, a family separation, and a total change of scene. That the Rous girls (as the neighbouring settlers styled them, amongst themselves) did not go off had long ceased to be either a wonder or a theme for speculation, for the younger men entertained a wholesome dread of the Captain, at the same time that they acknowledged Miss Sylvia and Miss Dorothy to be the only girls worth thinking of in the whole district. But the truer reason lay in the fact that they

were both entirely devoted to their widowed father, whom they could not bear the idea of leaving.

Like their father, they possessed the art of making themselves respected, and had at the same time the prettiest way of condescending, coupled with the art of concealing the condescension than I ever remember.

Vincent was an especial favourite with them, and they would think nothing of going, whether singly or together, to his hut, and knocking him up at any reasonable hour, to ask for one of his old books, or to refer to his memory with regards to some historic date, to inquire the proper time for budding their roses, and the like; and whenever he was asked to come up to the house, which was not seldom, it was always one of the girls that tripped down the rose avenue and through the big white gate to the bark-roofed shanty just above the watering place at the creek.

Everyone she chanced to meet by the way lifted his hat (you may be bound). Men *were* men in those days, and the affection that the Captain bore the girls came vicariously to the toilers and moilers, in the bright and happy smiles of the Captain's daughters.

Big Bill used to swear by Miss Dorothy, and the enthusiasm of Harry, our Narangan hut-keeper, for Miss Sylvia, knew no bounds; but as both these quaint specimens of Nature's gentlemen expressed their respectful admiration in discourse of a double-shotted character, it is best left to the imagination.

In fact, so well was the influence of the two girls appreciated, and so well-known their ready accessibility and kindness, that I could recount numbers of instances of fellows in some not-too-serious scrape (generally from some act of negligence) to come hat-in-hand to Miss — unbosom himself straight, and beg her "honour" or her "ladyship" (they had no great choice in titles), to make it straight for him with the Captain. When Miss, exercising a certain judicial shrewdness, most likely inherited from her mother's father (who, by the way, was on the Bench), would smilingly weigh the case with all its pros and cons, and, summing up with a good deal of mock-gravity, promise according to circumstances.

I fear I have been somewhat diffuse in my mention of the girls, but my sincere admiration and perfect respect must prove my best excuse. However, before ceasing to speak about the family which I loved *at a certain distance*, as well as my own flesh and blood, I must say a word or two in respect of Master Blake, the Captain's only son and heir. Blake Rous was a young man of the early Saxon type, tall, golden-haired, blue-eyed, florid, and with the frankest and most open expression of countenance of any young man that I can bring to mind; but he was doomed, notwithstanding his many prepossessing qualities, to be a terrible thorn in his father's side. To be brief, Blake Rous had committed the very manly error of falling in love; and, when a young man, especially a *very* young man, falls absolutely in love, the last thing he is likely to inquire into is the number of quarterings borne on the paternal shield of the lady.

When Blake was born, it was Captain Rous's distinct wish that he should one day adopt the naval profession, and do somewhat in justification of the illustrious name he had received from his god-fathers and his god-mothers in his baptism; but, as he grew up to be a big boy, after his gallant father had retired from the service and settled in the bush, Blake showed so marked a predilection for station life that the Captain, after having faced and weighed the matter carefully, decided upon letting him follow his natural bent, and began thereafter to regard him as his only possible successor at Mirambina. Now, although brought up in great measure at home, Blake did not share in his brave father's exclusiveness, but was hail-fellow-well-met with all the young men for twenty miles round—breaking-in a colt for one, helping another at mustering time, or organizing shooting expeditions with a third; but, when it came to protracted stays at neighbouring stations and projected visits to town, with certain of his new friends, Blake was given to understand that he made himself too cheap.

The boy naturally chafed at the restrictions, or rather what he *imagined* the restrictions imposed upon him; but, being a lad of an open and generous disposition, the cloud soon passed from his brow, and

he bravely resolved to be as happy as possible at Mirambina. This he managed to do for some time, going the rounds with the new boundary rider, cantering across to Narangan to see how affairs stood there; taking the girls out for drives, or lending a hand to Vincent in the multifarious little improvements that he was for ever initiating. But the lad sighed, and naturally enough too, for the society of companions of his own age; and this, Sylvia perceiving sooner than others, managed to obtain for him a fuller measure of liberty than he had of late enjoyed; encouraging him at the same time to ask over to Mirambina some of the more desirable and presentable of his young companions, from time to time. This, leading up as might have been expected, to an interchange of civilities and visits; the Hatherleys, George and John, sons of a highly respectable squatter who then held the Axleford station, were the first that made their way over to Mirambina.

Somewhat strange and shy, at first, these youngsters soon brightened up, under the influence of the hospitality they experienced, and Captain Rous, whom they had previously imagined a curmudgeon, as much surprised them by his geniality as he delighted them with his conversation.

Everything at Mirambina was new, therefore, wonderful in their eyes; the neatness, order and excellent taste that pervaded the entire establishment, the pictures, and their respective histories, the little armoury of South Sea Island weapons, the swords, books, and telescopes, etc., with something that Blake or the Captain had to recount respecting each, not to mention the indefinable something that had suggested to more experienced minds, the touch of deft, womanly fingers, and the glamour that the Rous girls had contrived to cast over it all.

When the young men, after having been fêted to their heart's content, and shown over the best part of the run, returned to Axleford, their admiration of all they had seen and heard, found expression in a string of superlatives.

The Captain, his daughters, the house, the grounds, the station management—they never had a right idea of it all till now. Everything they recounted

to their mother and sisters. They told of the snug, cosy little rooms they had to sleep in, with the soft and snowy beds, the prettily curtained windows, giving out on the garden, the toilet tables and pincushions (for not a single iota of detail had escaped them) even down to the little flat poreclain chamber candlesticks that they carried down with them through the hall, after prayers. "Never was such a place! So bright, so clean, so altogether nice. And there, every morning, just as we turned out, the boots at the door already polished and shining in the sun. One thing, Mother! cried John, we felt ashamed of, and that was our boots not being near so neat as Blake's or the Captain's, which looked quite like pictures. You must let us get our next from town, chimed in George, who having begun to see better things, boy-like, desired to copy and have the like henceforward for his own.

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It was not long before Blake was invited in return, to spend a week at Axleford, and it was barely three days after his arrival in those pleasant quarters that he fell clean head over ears in love with Annie Hatherley, a young lady quite two years older than himself. A boy of his particular stamp would arrest observation, and command admiration in any society, and old Mrs. Hatherley (herself a very shrewd judge of character), seeing in him nothing but what was fresh and innocent, and engaging, thought no harm of his Platonic philanderings with her only daughter. In short, so great was her confidence in her own first impression, that she never gave the subject a thought, trusting him, of her own experience of boys, as a matter of course.

And, very pleasant it was for an outsider like myself (I had been over to Hatherley's after the "Peter Finn" colt that very afternoon) to note all the pretty ways that Master Blake had with him in this sudden affair; the airs at once of protection and deference that he assumed towards Annie, and the veneration with which he had come to regard Masters John and George, since this new revelation from Heaven which had turned all Axleford into one Paradise, had just dawned upon him. He resisted all

attempts made to induce him to go out for a scamper, whether after cattle or kangaroos, alleging that he had enough and more than enough of *that* at home over there in Mirambina; adding also, a fellow cannot be always in the saddle, you know, and a walk in the garden or among the trees in the paddock acts as a rest.

Sylvia, I happen to know, when she is tired of setting the place in order, takes a rest with her sketching block and colour-box out on the lawn.

But when old Mr. Hatherley, with the kindest intent, and in a hearty Yorkshire accent, invited Blake to bear him company to the out-buildings there to see some newly-imported pigs of aristocratic descent, he seemed to hesitate for a second or so, but, remembering the veneration due to the father of the peerless Annie, he set out and followed the old farmer, with a sigh, hearing the pedigree of the Berkshire beauties as he marched along, a story indeed that passed out of one ear as rapidly as it entered the other; while his remarks and replies were so inconsequent that the kind old man hazarded the supposition that Master Blake wasn't after all too much at home with pigs, a saying that extorted a laugh from Blake, in which Mr. Hatherley heartily joined. Ah! you don't think much now of pigs, but wait till you get used to 'em, and, it's wonderful, I tell 'e, how one does take to 'em! I've found it so myself.

Blake, in sober earnest, was not thinking too much of pigs at that moment; but he mustered up all the *will* at his disposal, and politely replied that he would certainly try. In fact, he *had* heard that *some* pigs, especially those of China, were most interesting animals. Aye! and main good bacon, too! rejoined Mr. Hatherley, but, for the matter of that . . . give me your pure Berkshire. . . . "Certainly, sir!" assented Blake, with all the air of a schoolboy who assents to the truth of a mathematical proposition which he has neither the heart nor the application to prove for himself. Well, and that being so, rejoined the merry Yorkshireman, I'll pick you out a prime couple from the next litter and send them over to Mirambina by Parkins with the dray.

Blake's visits to Axleford became more and more

frequent, and Annie, who had long held her own, and put on all sorts of airs with him—cruel only to be kind—at last, relented.

It was just one of those little pieces of acting that never seems so pretty as in a juvenile cast—a good deal of make-believe, with lots of real sincerity, nevertheless, behind it. But Blake, as yet totally inexperienced in the strategy of love, took it en grand sérieux, and flattered himself on having won the stronghold after a desperate resistance offered. He neither saw the feint nor had the slightest idea of the flimsiness of the defences and outworks, nor indeed the foregone intention of the chatelaine to hold out only for a limited period, in fact, for no longer than she just chose. These two children (for in some respects they were but little more) agreed to consider themselves engaged, and as a consequence had to experience all the mingled sweet and bitter of an affair which they mutually dreaded confiding to their respective parents. Blake, though anything but a coward, shrank from telling his father, or even Sylvia or Dorothy, partly lest in their haste they should be unjust to Annie or her venerated parents, and much probably because the bare announcement might have the effect of putting a period to his Axleford visitings.

Annie, who (for her part) knew the exclusiveness of the Rous family from common report, and was also seised of the idea that her own worthy and independent people would never sanction so unequal a match, kept the secret sealed up in her own innocent bosom.

So these two, Blake and Annie, instead of wearing a naturally joyous appearance, grew as pale and careworn as any of the lovers one reads of in romance. Blake, besides neglecting his dogs and gun, and forgetting to bear his share in the pretty lattice-work that Vincent was fixing up around the summer-house, had contracted a habit of sighing as he took his way across the paddocks or through the garden, and it became pretty evident, both to Sylvia and to Dorothy, that something was amiss with the lad.

They noted also to their sorrow that he invariably fenced the questions put to him, and seemed to avoid

giving them his confidence, and this wounded them more deeply than all; but old Susy, who had been housekeeper in the family ever since the Captain's marriage, and enjoyed as a consequence all the indefinable privileges of an old domestic, soon divined the actual posture of affairs, and further, took good care to make known her views thereon to Miss Dorothy. Susy considered the Rous family without peer in the colony, and was as indignant at the bare idea of a mesalliance (such as she conceived to be contemplated) as if Master Blake, like King Cophetua, had incontinently set his affections on a beggar-girl.

I knew from the very first, Miss, exclaimed she with a shake of the head to give emphasis to her ideas, that no good ever could come of having those Hatherley-boys over to the House! The sweeping-up, and the scrubbing that had to be done after them—the litter, Miss! that they did make in their rooms to be sure! and the scraping and dry-rubbing that Thompson had to go through with their boots before he could ever dare to rough-black them, was something awful. *Them!*—gentlemen indeed!—but it serves Master Blake right, it do, though I'm sure the little hussy and that artful old mother of her's, *must* have led him on.

Thus far old Susy—and it only served to confirm Miss Dorothy in a suspicion that had crossed her own mind but which she had judiciously refrained from expressing. . . . She, of course, laughed the matter off, before Susy—but, making her way to the work-room where Sylvia was busily engaged over some paper patterns, unfolded to her all that had passed, whereupon Sylvia, dropping her scissors, opened her eyes wide, with an expression of mingled mirth and astonishment, which conveyed her ideas in a manner more forcible than all the eloquence of words could have accomplished.

The whole of the foregoing narrative is from the lips of Vincent and jotted down by myself some time afterwards, but breaking off just at that particular point of the story where we have just left it—with the remark that the fact of the family having found

asylum at Hatherley's after the great fire might possibly help on Master Blake's match again.

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He invited my attention to his laborious transcript of the partly burned volume, which it will be understood I have transferred bodily to the following pages; but this (my part in the affair) did not come to pass until after the death of my good old friend Vincent several years later on.

END OF THE AUSTRALIAN PROLOGUE.

THE ANCESTOR'S DEDICATION.

*A Book writ by an Old
Man, the First Part from Memory,
Some thereof from Notes
made on Divers Occasions;
and, what remains, from a Diary
Faithfully kept by him
In the Calm and Quiet Evening
of His Days—
This Volume with All it contains,
The Story of his Life
with All its Joys
And Crosses,
He inscribes
to
His many Descendants
In whatever. Age they may Live
In the Hope that, .
with
The Blessing of God,
One or More of Them,
Emulating the Enterprise of a Raleigh,
The Pure Patriotick Virtues and
Daring of a Blake,
or the
Consummate Skill and Valour
of a Cloudesley Shovell;
May elect to serve
in the Navies of that Country
whose Crown
Is the Glory of all Nations,
whose Heritage the Christian Religion,
And whose Empire
The Sea.*

JOHN ROUS

CHAPTER I.

A LITTLE FAMILY HISTORY.

From my earliest youth up, I have ever suffered from a strange hankering after the sea and the life supposed to be led by those that go down to the deeps thereof in ships and carry on their business in the great waters.

This disposition, possibly inherited, might be accounted a singular one, save for what small share my blood may have had in it; for be it known to all men by these presents that I was born in the County of Warwick, as central a part as there is in the kingdom, and which neither hath any sea-board of its own, nor yet such sufficiency of river frontage as to bring duly before my eyes the symbols and paraphernalia of a sea-going life. My mother's father, I ought to tell, was born in the first year of the reign of King Charles the First, and joined the navy of that illustrious sovereign, as a boy of twelve or thereabout, some time in 1637 (A.D.).

Later on in the day, when his most sacred Majesty was no more, having lost his head on account of the ship-money vote, my grandsire was at sea again, still in the service of his country, but this time under the orders of the Lord Protector, and aboard one of those very same grand cruisers, the building of which had brought the Royal head to the block. When that great and powerful prince, Rupert, lay in Kinsale Roads with his fleet, my grandfather sailed forth with Admiral Blake to give him battle; but His Highness, with desperate bravery, cut his way through the lines and made for Portugal. How Blake chased him into the Tagus, defied the Portuguese monarch, and virtu-

ally (though without any shadow of authority for so doing) proclaimed war against the Portuguese nation, is now so much matter of history. But my grandfather was not long to harass princes of the blood-royal, nor to carry fire and sword into the kingdoms of foreign though Christian potentates, for he fell badly wounded (alas! for us and for the country) fighting bravely by the side of his immortal admiral in the three days' glorious battle with Van Tromp off the Bill of Portland. This most signal victory had the effect of clearing the Channel of the Dutch invaders, who not only lost 2,000 slain in the three days' fight, but had also to yield up 1,500 as prisoners of war. Our own loss, small as it was, I do not regard as a trifle neither; for, besides my grandfather totally crippled and disabled, we counted in killed and wounded other gallant gentlemen and brave seamen such as few naval commanders save Admiral Blake could have shown. My grandfather came out of this dearly bought victory considerably knocked about; for, besides having his right leg shot away below the knee, he had several ugly splinter wounds, one of which, it was feared by the surgeons, would prove fatal; but, being a wholesome and sweet-blooded man, on whom all cuts and scratches healed kindly, he soon was himself again. This battle was his last, and indeed it proved the cause of his renouncing a profession that seemed to be the very soul of his existence.

He felt for years thereafter, as he expressed it himself, like to a sea-bird with a broken wing left to pine and bemoan itself on an inhospitable shore. But that my grandfather's condition was not utterly desperate may be judged from the fact that I am here to-day to write about him. At the period I allude to he was still a bachelor and living at Cheltenham for the sake of the waters, which he took with praiseworthy punctuality morning and evening.

While in this place, I must observe that he was thrown much into the society of the beautiful Miss Dorothy Trumpington, a lady of one of the first Yorkshire families, and the reigning toast of the Spa.

Touched by his misfortune (for my grandfather's was too proud a case for pity), she discovered a tender interest in him, which manifested itself in a thousand

pretty and nameless ways, at once both pleasant and provoking. She loved to sit beside him on one or other of the many resting places on the terrace, hearing him fight his battles over again as he leaned on his tall gold-headed cane. And, if ever man worshipped woman in this world, 'twas my grandfather that adored the handsome and accomplished Miss Dolly Trumpington.

Still, the beaux did not grow tired of standing behind her chair on the terrace, or waylaying her in the walk, or fluttering about her coming out of church, as the case might be.

Indeed, they never ceased quarrelling about her fancied favours and preferences over their cups, or sending her high-sounding verses and perfumed billets-doux. One of these gallants, a Captain Chubbe, of His Grace the Duke of Monmouth's Second Maritime Regiment, who had secretly suborned her maid, and so obtained of her, at the cost of a couple of guineas, one of her neat high-heeled satin shoes, had the rare audacity to toast her nightly therein in the midst of his boon companions. When the news of this came to my grandfather's ears he was all of a smother with indignation, and vowed the rascal condign chastisement in the shape of a sound caning in the pump-room. But a friend whom he took privily into his counsels (one Mr. Foljambe, of the Royal Regiment of Artillery), remarking that such an action on his part might only serve to loose the tongue of public scandal, and so make the lady's name all too cheap, he replied with strong animation, Right, Charles! Thou wert ever a discreet and sensible fellow; I own I have no manner of right to play the champion's part. Not yet—at all events.

That is to say, not up to this present time, added Foljambe, with a heavy sigh (for indeed he was sorely smitten with her himself).

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These last words set my brave grandfather a-thinking; but he lost no time, nor suffered (as the saying goes) the grass to grow under his feet.

Arraying himself forthwith in his best uniform (which his half-pay rank gave him every right to continue to wear), and cocking his laced hat over his left eye with the same gay and rakish air as any young gallant of the Spa, he hied him straight away, nor paused until he found himself in the best drawing-room of her father's hired apartments. He was in act to arrange the ends of his snowy cambric cravat in an oval mirror with branches that stood over the mantelpiece, when he caught sight of her adorable figure as she came radiantly tripping into the room, with a jaunty garden hat in full feather hanging by the riband over her beautifully rounded arm. That they both saw in the faithful mirror what as it happened was not then far off is matter of evidence to myself.

What thereupon occurred was of far too sacred a character for my grandfather ever to divulge; but thus much—which he afterwards told to my dear mother in her girlhood, came to me from her own lips, and dearly she loved to relate it.

If (quoth he) you can forgive a scarred frontispiece, my beautiful Dorothy, that, and a timber toe, such as I be and all that remains of one of Blake's oldest captains is yours till death! . . .

Whereupon she, falling on his bosom, and thereby going nigh to capsize him (as he phrased it), made pretty utterance in broken speech touching honourable wounds, and all in front, too, and so forth, and finally added, steadying the brave old Captain in her arms as he spoke, And as for your timber toe, dear Harry, why I glory in it!

These words—these most gracious and generous words, exclaimed my grandfather (with a fine flourish of his cane and one of those grand old sea-going oaths such as General-Admiral Blake himself had not scorned to use withal), made me hers for ever!

I was too full of my new happiness, quoth he, to think of having the fellow's blood! but, watching my opportunity, I called him to strict account for his past delinquency, and, telling him at the same time that I was now the young lady's natural protector, I forced an apology from him on my own terms. I felt, doubt-

less, an accession of that generosity which a sudden and unexpected good fortune always inspires in the justly inclined; and, like a newly crowned monarch, I signified my gratitude to heaven "rather in proclaiming an amnesty than by ordering public execution."

With Dame Dorothy there came into our family blue eyes, a dimple, dainty ankles and a little brown mole on the neck, which latter sign my own dear mother bore with her to the grave.

Allowing for the variety of fashion in the different periods, Sir Peter Lely's portrait of Dame Dorothy was my mother's exact image.

N. J. Rous.

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Beyond an old-fashioned hat and sword, item, a piece of tarnished lace embroidery, I had seen no personal relics of my maternal grandsire. Some books, however, once his own, full of curious figuring and calculation, and with plain remarks in a bold and not unbeautiful hand, scribed between the lines of cyphering, I had examined again and again; but always laid them by in the long run as past my poor knowledge and comprehension.

But what I did love, and what I was wont to take up with me into the attic storey at home to solace myself withal, were four goodly volumes of the Dutch voyagers—great quartos in stout canvas covers, clearly printed, and set forth with wide margins, whereon were short bracketed sentences in a smaller type as guides to the matter in hand. One would give you a date; another a reckoning of longitude; another again a remark touching the prevailing winds throughout the region treated of.

On these broad margins I loved well, after the lapse of so many lustres, to trace my dear grandfather's thoughts in his own big and burly letters, written in boldly, as though he felt none of the terror, such as would smite us of to-day, did we score down our thoughts on a printed book costing the sum of two guineas a volume.

In one place he would write in against the Dutch-

man's entry, Surely wrong! and he cannot mean Trinidad neither; for how could he have fetched it so soon from St. Thomas, and that with only a top-sail breeze?

In another part I found written in, Pity 'tis that so fine a seaman should give way to brag. Nevertheless, 'twas a brave day's work, etc., etc.

These books were garnished and beautified with maps and cuts showing in some sort the outlines of certain islands and continents, and elsewhere with curious draughts of the figures of strange Indians or Caribs with their canous or boats hollowed out from logs of trees, whether by force of fire or burning, or with such rude tools as they may have possessed made from stones or flints.

Besides all these, the pictured fury of the storm, with the good ships stripped to the encounter, diving down and rising again in good heart like the stout Cornishman in a wrestling bout of to-day. But beyond these again in point of majesty were the grand and mysterious figures of white and rolling clouds of smoke, that reminded me of naught so much as a common council man's cauliflower wigg, and that but newly curled and powdered.

Above these one discerned the tops of masts, and ends of spars, and much tracery of rigging and cordages; the same oft-times bedecked with streamers and gonfalons of swallow-tails, after the French manner.

It made my heart beat loud and quick (I was but a stripling at this time), the thought that my brave old grandsire, who made so little of the Dutchman's margins, should have threshed the self-same ships I saw here, dealing out death and destruction to flotillas of armed Periaguas full of Carib Indians.

My father, a builder by his own choice (and I must say so, though it should look proud in me), a master of his craft, cared for none of these things.

A staunch member of the Protestant Church, he spoke nevertheless of his late Majesty King William, of pious and immortal memory, after a fashion that showed no great love, neither too much respect.

As for all Dutchmen, he cursed them up hill and

down dale for a sixteen-breeched, shilling-seeking, floor-scrubbing people in wooden shoes.

He never could commit himself to speaking of the Dutch nation, nor of the States-General; but of the Dutch community, and the vestry at the Hague, or by some such other trope or figure.

For my own part I admired the Dutchman, albeit I loved him not. I had been a hard young man indeed had I refused that tribute of worship and respect to a people of whom my distinguished grandfather had sent so many to their last account in defence of the flag and the nation . . . though then no crown was.

CHAPTER II.

IN WHICH A TRADE IS CHOSEN FOR ME.

My father (as I have said before) was anxious now that I grew to be a big lad to have me apprenticed to his own trade. Had he instead of this desired to learn me the profession of a shipwright, I had perchance not rebelled, and these pages had never been written. Howbeit, I received his commands as in duty bound, and set myself (heavy-hearted though I was) to acquire such book-learning as was judged most expedient for me.

I threaded my way with my father through the mazes of arithmetic, and tried my best to comprehend both lineal measurement and the cubical contents; I went even further, for in his absence I sat me down and essayed to analyse specifications and contracts, but only to rise bewildered, perplexed, and more out of humour with myself than ever; but, as there is no shadow where no light is, so is there no study so dry but what hath some show of interest for him who approaches it with goodwill.

What brings me to this reflection is the memory of my father taking me at this period to learn some of the closer particulars of the business.

I took amazingly to Master Bellamy, once (in years gone by) a boatswain in the King's navy; and a better man never passed a lashing nor rigged a scaffold. I imbibed with avidity such-like knowledge as was his to impart, chiefly in the matter of purchases, tackles and falls, parbuckles, bowlines and hitches, etc.; also in the setting up of sheers and scaffold-poles, and the conduct of the capstan in swaying aloft huge masses of stone. But all this by no means satisfied my father. I must, he plainly told me, learn other things besides, which I was now neglecting for mere block and tackle work:

this, or else renounce the builder's craft entirely! Nay; he actually got so far as to threaten to bind me to Master Wragge, the great clothier and hosier of the main street in Warwick.

My gorge rose thereat, for the bare memory of the smell of his new corduroys and fustians filled me with so strong a disgust that it had like to cause me an indigestion. One day my father, having been more than commonly vexed with me because of certain misconduct of my own, I fled from the works, nor did I halt once by the way till I got home to my mother.

I told her, with some show of natural emotion, that there was but one way of pleasing my father, the which I had signally missed, for I could never bring myself to be a builder; and thereafter, when I came to detail to her how it was proposed to bind me by way of punishment to Mr. Wragge, the great clothier, and the disgust I had ever entertained for all frippery and hosiery and yard-measures, so say naught of the close smell of a draper's shop, she could not choose but smile.

Grandfather, cried I (with a swagger that she found vastly diverting), was a sailor and a gentleman! Let me, mother, be the sailor first, and the fine gentleman afterwards. Sir Cloudesley (they say) was nought but a simple cabin-boy when first he came to tempt the sea. Look at him now! with his honoured name on every wall, and his head scribed in a wreath atop of all the sea-ballads! Nay! if I must be bound at all, let me be bound to her most excellent Majesty the Queen, for I have no stomach for Master Wragge.

Tut! tut! exclaimed my dear mother, smiling again as she spoke. "We are not all Sir Cloudesleys here; and thy brave grandfather, when he joined the service, had already the King's livery on his back and a little hanger on his hip—an officer and a gentleman to begin with. He was bright and clever, too. He loved the sea. But, alas! what is cleverness? (for thou art clever too) an one wants for a friend at Court to push his interests!

After some further ado she drew me towards her, where she sat in the big oaken chair by the chimney-

piece, and embraced me, at the same time stroking my head.

Methought then I saw in her eyes, bright with tears as yet unshed, that she approved of my young ambition; but when she gathered sufficient breath to speak, and declared she saw my brave grandfather's living image in myself, my emotion knew no bounds. I threw my arms around her and embraced her in my turn with ardour, nor did I forsake my hold till I had won from her a complete promise to intercede with my father that very day on my behalf.

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What passed between my father and my mother I never exactly learned. And indeed I had never again gone nigh the great building whereupon I had been but lately employed, save it was to take a kind leave of Master Luke Bellamy, who had always been so good to me.

To speak by the card, 'twas he that first fanned the flame of my young desire for the sea-life into a steady blaze with his stirring relation of sharp encounters with the King's enemies on the high seas, besides divers portrayals of marvellous adventures with the buccaneers among the West India Keys, or out upon the Spanish Main, where, scrambling along with his messmates up the smoking quarter of some huge galleon with cutlass between his teeth and pistol in hand, he singed the Spaniard's beard for him, and, swooping down on pieces-of-eight, plate, ingots of silver and doubloons galore, made her a lawful prize.

*Again, too, where he would recall some Spanish-American Capua, where, reclining on a silken couch in a richly laced coat, he tossed off his sangaree to the tinkling of guitars and the clatter of castanetas, among the most lovely of their sex, who, incontinently despoiling themselves of chains and bracelets of massy gold (the better to save robbery), thrust them on his acceptance, at the same time imploring him to spare their village the sailor-like amenities of fire and sword.

*Strange how I came to put this along with Luke Bellamy's stories. 'Tis a Woodes-Rogers, and anyhow, the taking of Guiaquil was not till 1709.—J.R.

What hairs now remain to me (beneath my wig) are white, and my leg hath lost its former roundness, insomuch that the silken stocking shows to my unimaginable distress wrinkles that were not wont to be; but, for all this, I can still recall the horror that froze my young blood as I listened to that terrible tale of Master Bellamy touching an entire ship's company made to walk the plank, man after man overboard, from the armed privateer "Kingfisher," off the Bahamas, also the salvage narration touching an English prisoner compelled at the point of the sword to eat his own ears, carbonadoed and served up to him with red pepper and pimento on a silver dish. But a truce to these memories—they but serve to divert me from the thread of my story which I came to drop for awhile, as a found myself taking leave of honest Master Luke Bellamy.

CHAPTER III.

IN WHICH MY VALISE IS PACKED.

When my dear mother first made the acquaintance of the young man that afterwards became my father, she was one of two orphan sisters living with an aunt, one Mistress Tunstall in London. The house lay on the south side of Fleet-street at the end nearest Ludgate Hill; a poor lodging enough, being but a first floor over a hairdresser's. The remains of her father's accumulated savings, though diligently husbanded, were coming to a lower ebb every day. It was then just about this period that John Rous came to lodge with Mistress Tunstall.

He was a young man, most respectably connected, being himself a son of the Reverend Anthony Rous, perpetual curate of Saint Mary's, Warwick, but the trade or profession which he had sensibly chosen for himself to follow, had well nigh proved a serious bar to the marriage he had so much at heart. However, Mistress Tunstall, overlooking the builder in the son of the church, gave her consent and without a murmur to his marriage with her niece; a circumstance noteworthy in itself, but the less to be wondered at, considering that young John Rous was worth two hundred and fifty pounds per annum in dry money, and had the offer besides of a large and exceeding profitable contract in Warwick, whither he shortly afterwards betook himself. I mention these few facts, albeit, I have my own fears lest they make my narrative somewhat tedious; but I do so, mainly to let you know what was the exact difference in quality between the father and mother that the Almighty had provided for me. She, ever dwelling in her own private mind in her illustrious father, whom Admiral Blake had proudly styled his right hand, and pattern sea-

man. He, with no care nor liking for a warrior whether in a blue or scarlet coat, and despising equally the cloth of the church (to which he had early taken a disgust) thought on nothing save bricks and mortar, joists, king-posts and rafters, or the like, and never was so happy as when in fancy, he laid one stone upon another.

My mother had given him clearly to understand that my clay was too finely tempered to be used for the ordinary potter's vessel, also that it behoved him to suffer me to follow my natural bent, and become a sailor as my brave grandsire had been before me.

Being out of humour with me already, he did not long withhold his consent; but my mother, who conveyed it to me with sighs and many bitter tears, added that she feared lest I should have to fight my own way to promotion, as he was minded not to advance me a solitary stiver.

* * * *

It was finally settled that I should be sent to London, where my Grand-Aunt Tunstall was willing to receive me, though herself somewhat of an invalid at this time. If, on acquaintance made with ships and sailors, I should still desire to go to sea, my wishes were to be respected; but, in the first place, I was to be obedient to my grand-aunt in all things, and accord her such help as she most might need, what in running her errands, carrying her books to church of a Sunday; and maybe at certain remote intervals even turning the spit in her frugal kitchen: in short, generally enacting the part of a trusty house-dog.

When I was yet a boy we had none of those rare facilities for travelling that we enjoy nowadays, **Anna** regnante. Indeed the communication between Warwick and London was long, laborious and wearisome. There was the overloaded coach whose passengers were prayed to get out and walk betimes so, best to ease the cattle up hill, or through some space of quaking bog or morass: and the dangers from the gentlemen of the road, not to speak of the more subtle dangers,

where evil company (picked up by the way) clambered by the ostler's ladder up into the coach, and elbowed honest folk for room.

Let me pass in silence over my parting with my father; and reverently and in sorrow over my mother's tears. Suffice it for thee, dear descendant (who-soever thou art that readest these lines) that I am now at the time whereof I write, a stranger in London, and a wanderer, seeking out Mistress Tunstall's lodging.

It so fell out that the tavern where our coach, "The Duke," stopped, was hard bye Temple Bar, where the pillory was then set up, and the direction thence was plain as the head on a pike-staff. I *had* thought, among so many houses, to have had trouble enough over it; but, I made out the place with an ease and a suddenness that seemed to bring some touch of fatality with it.

When I came to the door of the hairdresser's and wigmaker's shop over which my Grand-Aunt Tunstall had her lodging; I found the same fastened on the outside with a padlock, and there was some sort of placard placed in the window for the public eye to announce to all people that Master Curll was henceforward to be found only at number forty-three, Cornhill, whereof the shop bore the sign of Absalon and the Oak Tree: item, that the first floor here was to let at the same time as the shop.

At this first silent and written rebuff, I felt strangely alone in the huge overgrown city; for, so big is it that six Warwicks might lie easily perdu therein and never be smoked; but, I plucked up courage, and, having (as the saying goes) an English tongue in my head, I addressed myself to making enquiry of the neighbours. This, I judged the wisest plan to begin with; but I had determined already in event of failure to fall back on the perruquier in Cornhill (wherever that might be!) and there at the sign of Absalon and the Oak Tree. But, alas! it needed not to speed me to Cornhill for my news, as this, being ill news, was shorter and easier to get at than any other.

The neighbour that I first consulted (a buxom young woman of twenty or thereabout) gave me a rapid and graphic sketch of the last days of my only relation in the Great City; and a few little tender touches which she added to her description of the funeral, that she had watched from her chamber window, were, I protest, monstrous pathetic, but, if you would be exactly informed, quoth the sempstress (for such was her quality), hie thee hence to Cornhill, where lives Master Curll, the hairdresser. You will follow back from here where you stand to Temple Bar; thence up and on through Holborn, where, turning to the right, you will pass Snow Hill (you'll know Snow Hill, I'll warrant), and so on through Newgate-street and Chepe till you come to where the street forks into two, whereof take the left-hand street, and you are on the sloping shoulder of Cornhill just before you run down toward Leadenhall Market and old Aldgate pump.

And so ran on till I gently checked her in observing than I had not been in London above two hours, and that for the first time in my life.

CHAPTER IV.

ALONE IN THE WORLD.

I made my way by dint of repeated questionings and observations to Master Curll's shop in Cornhill, where I was received most courteously, and also with some considerable flow of comfortable and consoling language by the worthy perruquier himself.

On my detailing for his information what had been my own plans, what my education and aspirations, he tapped himself thoughtfully a-one side of the nose with his index-finger, and, assuming thereupon all the airs of a man who has patronage to bestow, assured me I might reckon my fortune as good as made, for said he, my shop is frequented by the first people in the land, and I had an admiral's peruke in ('twas but last week) to be curled and set in prime order against Her Most Gracious Majesty's next drawing-room. I have here, young sir, the very cream of both Services, and in that tall chair which you see yonder we have our colonels, our majors, and our commodores any day of the week.

I attend also on these gentlemen at their clubs, and have been oftentimes called in with my big travelling case to Somerset House, the Horse Guards and the Admiralty, to such of the great as desire not only expedition but privacy. . . . A word from me, sir, on one one of these occasions, put in edge-wise (as it were) is not to be despised.

Again, I have a connection of the which I am prouder still, and in regard whereof it may be in my power to serve your honour among the wits of the day at the coffee-houses—at Will's, the Cocoa-Tree and the Grecian—besides, my brother Edmund, being one of the first publishers in Fleet-street; so, an your

honour . . . discover the itch for scribbling, or would qualify for a secretaryship, whether afloat or ashore; there are two right worshipful gentlemen whom I might whisper in the ear—to wit, the Reverend Lemuel Burrowes, a learned divine, even now lacking an amanuensis; also Captain George Sartorius, of the Queen's Navy, but presently engaged in the chartroom at the Admiralty. . . . However, all in good time. I shall sound these gentlemen on the very first convenient opportunity.

CHAPTER V.

IN WHICH THE DUCKLING FIRST MAKES FOR THE WATER.

One thing you may well depend upon: I made my way down to the Thames the very first thing next morning, and the sight thereof dawning on me (as it indeed did) through a golden mist seemed in some sort a vision of Fairy Land. Fortune favoured me, for I was entirely alone, and fancy having free rein fairly bore me away into the realms of enchantment. The huge, massy quadrangle of the Tower, looming bluely large through the atmosphere with its four corner turrets and pinnacles guarded the awakening stream, and the tall masts of the shipping beneath, like so many polished and gilded lances in close array, symbolized to my rapt senses an armed squadron of horse that beleaguered some giant's castle; but, as the veil of golden and rosy-tinted vapours lifted and was lost in mid-air, I made out tall, embattled hulls with carven and gilded quarter-galleries, and grand balconied sterns pierced with many windows and surmounted by huge poop lanterns with glasses all aglow and beaming in the rays of the morning sun. Anon, I became aware of dusky forms in motion on the decks, and heard for the first time the brazen music of ships' bells and the cries of mariners. Dogs began to bark; . . . I distinguished boats moving slowly out from among the black and solemn shadows projected from the vessels on the water, and the clank of the oar and the rush of foam-bells before the prow brought me a newer pleasure as I listened. The towering spars and yards and all the varied and curious web of nautical apparel stood out more sharply against the brightening sky. One by one the ships unfurled their ancients in the sun, and gave their fork-tongued pendants wavering to the winds. A barge with a nut-brown



and much-patched mainsail fetched across stream from Greenwich-wards, haling along, and lifting sometimes a little black cock-boat after her by the nose; and by a faintish wreath of pale blue smoke trailing away astern under the foot of the darkened sail, I judged that the crew breakfasted *chemin-faisant*, as Jack Frenchman hath it. This circumstance reminding me of my own morning meal, and being in fear lest I should keep my worthy landlady waiting, with one more lingering look on the river and all its wonders and enchantments, I bent my steps toward my lodging.

.

"Better to be born lucky than rich." . . . My joy came upon me with a suddenness that had like to upset me. It subsequently appeared that this my rare good fortune was owing not less to my friend Harry Redmayne's exertions than to any interest my dear mother had been able to bring into play.

She had recognized an old schoolmate and friend in the wife of the honourable gentleman who represented Coventry in Parliament, and, having written her a very careful letter wherein she recalled their former intimacy and recited her gallant father's services to the country under Admiral Blake and other valiant commanders, adding that she had now a boy of her own of 13 years, who was actually dying to be permitted to follow in his grandsire's footsteps, etc. This fully accounts for my having received my appointment so soon after my arrival in London, and indeed, to tell the plain truth, men were sorely wanted, too, about this period for the convoy service of our West India and Portugal shipping.

.

Harry took me to his own tailors, Messrs. Truefitt and Waddingham, of Bishopsgate-street-within. I was presented to the chief of that respectable firm, who, upon learning that I was an officer of Her Majesty's Navy, and well-known to a certain honourable lord of the Treasury, would insist on measur-

ing me himself—a operation which he executed with a care and fidelity such as I never experienced neither before nor since.

Being a regular tailor to the United Service, he advised me that I had no need to go farther afield for the remainder of my equipment, and, besides displaying much blue and scarlet cloth, which he unrolled before us, was at no small pains to pull out drawers full of golden buttons and rolls of lace. Also he unpacked certain little hats (with cockades already affixed in black varnished leather), the which I tried on one after the other: then, with air of a connoisseur, he handed me politely for my approval a handsome black waist-belt clasped with two lions' heads (or rather faces) in gold, attached whereto was what Harry had nicknamed irreverently a "cheese-toaster." I was much pleased with it on the whole, though disappointed somewhat in regard of the size.

.

In three days' time exactly, as agreed upon with Mr. Truefitt, my suit came home. I found, on arriving after one of my long walks through the city, a big parcel lying on my bed, and inscribed as under:—

"Mr. Nicholas John Rous, R.N."
etc., etc., etc.

Seeing my name already imprinted (as it were) upon the roll of fame (though indeed 'twas but an address on a tailor's parcel that inspired the idea), I gave way to the most extravagant demonstrations of joy and enthusiasm.

By and bye, coming more to my right mind, I turned the key in the lock of the door, and, running back to the bed, opened my precious packet. The hat I placed upright on the pillow, and, having unrolled the blue jacket and white kerseymere vest, busied myself in peeling the silver paper off the buttons, as also from the delicate hilt and shoe of the hanger, the clasps of the belt, etc.

On the plain blue pantaloons I bestowed but a glance, though the skill of the tailor had, methought,

deserved better things at my hand. Then, having disposed them all in due order on the snowy counterpane, the cheerful blaze of the fire winking through the fender on all the golden bravery of my new apparel, I flung myself on my knees beside the bed, and in a silent prayer, different from that I had learned at my mother's knee, I prayed God to make me a good officer and a brave man to defend the Crown and country as my gallant grandsire had done before me, and to make me in due time a terror to the Queen's enemies.

.

Now, at sixty years of age, I can afford to smile at this outburst of youthful enthusiasm; but I look back on that unwitnessed scene—I do protest I **envy** myself that freshness of feeling, as also that thorough-going sincerity, which is one of the best, as it is one of the chiefest, attributes of youth.

I had scarcely arisen from my knees when the bell for dinner began to ring, and when I got me downstairs it was already late. As I entered the dining-room the maid put into my hand a letter for me which had just arrived by the coach. This I put into my pocket till dinner should be over, though I felt no small curiosity as to its contents, particularly seeing that the handwriting on the cover was entirely unknown to me.

The letter lay burning in my pocket (if I may be permitted the use of the expression), but we were very merry over our dinner that evening, though Harry Redmayne had failed to make one of us, as reasonably expected. One of our company, a grave city gentleman who was a principal clerk at the docks, gave me joy of my commission, but added that for a boy of his own (had heaven blest him with such) he might have preferred the East India service, where the pay was better, a knowledge of mercantile affairs within one's grasp, and seamanship, also the profession of arms (with all due respect), as carefully cultivated even as in Her Majesty's Royal Navy.

Nevertheless he complimented me on the due fulfilment of my wishes, and drank to my good health and

a prosperous career in a bumper of Madeira. Our second lodger, who was never so much at home as when discoursing on politics, assured me that he was glad to find I had chosen the navy as my profession; for, added he, with a flourish of his napkin, "we have need of brave men just now to defend the State as well as to curb and overawe certain of the more licentious and perfidious European Powers. In short, he explained, I do not at all favour the reports at Garraways and The Cocoa-Tree to-day touching the present attitude of the Grand Turk, nor of his secret relations with the Sultan of Persia, but, he continued (with all the air of a man who has succeeded in convincing himself), so long, sir! as our fleet keeps the seas, our East Indian commerce runs no risk of being crippled.

So saying, he pushed his chair back a little, and, crossing his legs at his ease, poured out a glass of wine, drinking off the same with his humble service to myself.

Now, although these were but purely friendly expressions on the part of these my two seniors towards me, and not to be regarded in the formal light of toasting, I gathered from the expression of their countenances that somewhat was expected of myself. Then I, though entirely unused to such scenes, nor as yet even to the company of my elders, plucked up courage and begged these gentlemen, with such firmness and modesty as I could best command, that her most sacred Majesty Queen Anne should never want for a defender while John Rous had a sword to draw or a leg to stand upon.

Whether it was the glass of Madeira, a liquor to which I was totally unaccustomed, or the excitement attendant on the affairs of the day, I know not, but it was the longest speech I had ever made in all my life, and the two old gentlemen applauded my sentiments to the echo.

Mr. Masterman, the political amateur, shortly proposed that we three should go together to the play at Drury Lane, whereat Macbeth was to be presented by Her Majesty's Servants, and offered to treat me to the pit; but Mr. Barnaby, of the Dock Company's Offices,

excusing himself hastily on the ground of letters to write, rang the bell and called for a lily-white clay and a screw of the best Virginia, whereupon Mr. Masterman, looking at his big silver repeater, enjoined me to make ready, to empty my pockets before starting, and, above all, not to forget a stout oaken stick in case of accidents.

With what delight did I climb the stairs leading to my apartment, skipping up thereby two steps at a time, and whistling as I went. My appointment, my spick and span new uniform, and my first play, all in the one week! and now I was out on a cruise up the gaily lighted street, "an officer and a gentleman," and meet company therefore for my seniors.

As I turned out my pockets, and duly disposed their contents in my drawer, what should fall out but the letter that Molly had put into my hand just as I entered the dining-room.

.

Though it is not now to be expected that I should be able to quote the exact words of this letter. It's sense, alas! I can yet render but too faithfully. It was in my father's hand, but addressed by some other and dated from Warwick some three days back. In it I was enjoined to hie straight home without loss of time if I would see my dear mother alive. Will Swaine would look after me, and I need not trouble about the money, as that matter was all settled beforehand. "Use despatch! Lose no time," were the last words. How well do I remember them yet! My heart, like Joshua's sun, stood still, my brain reeled. I had fairly to cling to the post of my bed for support. It was the first time I had ever experienced a mental shock in my life. The news was too sudden to cause me tears, and the necessity for instant action staved off the tender emotion till a future and entirely private occasion.

I write this seven and forty years later, but just then I had neither the leisure nor the humour to philosophize on this subject.

.

When I had sufficiently recovered myself to act, I drew forth my valise from its hiding place beneath the bed and packed it over again. I had just opened the door and was in the very act to run down stairs, when I knocked against Molly, who told me with some show of tartness (but which vexed me not at the time) that Mr. Masterman awaited me in the best parlour. "I have no heart," cried I, "for play-houses to-night, nor for play-actors neither, but, stay! Say I will be with Mr. Masterman directly."

"Is this the boasted punctuality of Her Majesty's Navy, my noble commodore?" exclaimed Mr. Masterman, with a fine affectation of severity. "The curtain rises at half-past eight of the clock to 'Rule Britannia,' and Mr. Macklin is to essay to murder Banquo in a new periwig!" But, judging from my face that I was troubled, and perceiving also that I had my little valise with me, he took me by the hand and inquired of me with an air of much concern whether I had any ill-news.

"Ill news, my dear sir!" I sobbed in reply, for my great grief came upon me just in proportion as his honest sympathy reached me. "I may be (God be kind to me!) an orphan at this very moment," and, dragging the letter from my bosom, I made bold to desire that he would read it for himself.

Mr. Barnaby, who had finished writing for the present, came in with the "Evening Journal" in one hand, and a long white pipe in the other, and proceeded to smoke; when Mr. Masterman, with a look towards myself as if to gain my consent, put the letter into his hands, which, when he had read over slowly and with a grave countenance, he folded again, and, rising to his feet, placed his two hands kindly on my shoulders. "You are quite right, my brave young friend," said he. "There is no time to be lost. Masterman shall go with you to the coach-office at Temple Bar, and I myself will treat with our excellent landlady, and provide that your chamber shall be locked, and kept 'in statu quo.' As for the rest," quoth he, "why! you may make John Barnaby your banker!"

I thanked him from the bottom of my heart, but he only waved his hand impatiently, adding that whatever

he might choose to spend on my account, I could repay him on some future day at my proper leisure (and as I could best afford it. I am not a believer, said he, in cordials or such-like quackeries, but a glass of good sound wine from the docks, such as this, is a sovereign restorative when one haply feels faint or sick from whatever cause.

So saying, he poured me out a glass from a particular bottle that he reached down from a shelf, and, when he had made me drink it, hurried both Mr. Masterman and myself out of the room, after a kind and brief farewell.

.

That night, hastening along the lamp-lit street with my companion, the cool breeze playing on our faces. How well I remember it all, even now!

I can recall the jostling of the people we encountered in the crowd and press, the voices of those that cried "Tripe!" or "Hot Chestnuts!" the gay equipages of the great bound for rout or play; the macaroni-exquisites swaying along in their gilded chairs borne on men's shoulders, the running footmen with torches, and, in particular a half-tipsy Grenadier haranguing a night-watchman out in front of his box, that I seem to hear and to see now. The office which was close to Temple Bar was brilliantly lighted, and the coach with four stout bays stood in front of the door, and was only beginning to fill.

Mr. Masterman assisted me up the ladder to the box, where I speedily seated myself beside Will Swaine and between two blazing lamps. Mr. Masterman stood for what seemed a long time, below—and kept my courage up with much talk on politics, assuring me in tones of confidence, "That if it were only true that the French King had concluded an alliance with the Sultan of Zanguebar, the route round the Cape would become doubly perilous in time of war, which, of course, would necessitate the sending out of stronger convoys. He had barely concluded, when the guard blew such a blast upon his horn as reminded me of

the walls of Jericho in Holy Writ, and Will Swaine, gathering up the reins on one hand, smacked his whip lustily, and off we set at a round trot.

.

Tears filled my eyes as I turned me about and waved my hat to the receding figure of my friend, Mr. Masterman; and I had not well swallowed down the great lump that rose in my throat, when we rolled away out on our journey under the Arch.

* * * *

REDUX.

Our journey, if none of the most speedy (indeed the roads were somewhat heavy just then) was at least, a safe one.

As for myself, I observed but little by the way unless I may except such taverns and village inns as we drew rein at, where Will Swaine would change horses, and study his own jolly features in the shining pewter at the bottom of a huge tankard. Curiosity gave place perforce to fatigue, and I dropped off into a profound slumber on the box of the stage coach, and just as naturally as if in my own snug little bed at the lodging in Cornhill; but, on the second day, as we drew near to the outskirts of Warwick, I grew thoroughly wakeful and observant, making out the vast and familiar bulk of the castle on the rock, with County Guy's tower and ever so many corner turrets and knots of chimneys painted darkly against the orange-tawney of the sky, that shut out the sunset; also, the sharply delineated spires that we knew for Saint Nicholas's and Saint Mary's, together with the gables and pinnacles of Leicester's Hospital: and I felt as we advanced further and further into the velvety and palpably growing darkness, through which glimmered many a well-known window's light, that I was at last really approaching home.

.

I remember distinctly now how small I felt on alighting from the box seat, as I essayed to stretch my

cramped legs, which bent powerless under me, and how unsteady and tottering my gait as I left the brightly lighted doorway of the "Dun Cow," and took my way homewards along a path that my feet knew already by instinct.

To my great relief and comfort, I noticed lights in the front windows of our house. . . . The door stood half-way open, and as I closed the garden gate behind me, and stole along over the sounding gravel in the cool night air (now heavy with the odour of honey-suckle) I distinguished the dark figure of my father, and perceived the intermittent glow of the fire in his pipe-bowl. From the orchard behind the house I heard the joyous bark of old Jowler, who gave tongue as he first recognised my footfall, and rapidly putting all these signs together, I felt justified in hoping for the best.

I heaved a deep sigh of relief, and began to experience what Bunyan's Pilgrim must have done at the little wicket gate on the hill, when his grievous burden fell from off his shoulders.

My heart, already considerably softened towards my father, prompted me to run to meet him, with an affection, wherein it shamed me to think, I had been failing for some time past. Recent events, I doubt not, had produced their effect on himself, and, methought, when he took me by the hand there, under the old lime tree in the stillness of the starry night, that I discovered a loving pity. Nay! a something even akin to real regret in the touch.

He drew me aside into the garden, and, with one arm resting kindly on my neck and shoulder, so walked along until we were removed some distance from the house.

"My mother, sir!" cried I, pressing the hand that sustained me as I spoke, "does she mend at all?"

"A little," he replied. "Not much," and the voice was broken like that of one talking in a dream.

"She is in no worse case than yesterday; but the draught left by the young physician from London, has brought her the first sleep she has known for an entire week."

"I would not have her disturbed, sir," I exclaimed with emotion, "not for an entire universe!"

"My dear Jack," rejoined my father, tenderly pressing my hand, "certainly not. None can tell what may not hang on this blessed sleep; and, not until she has been long awake, must she know that you are here, and under the same roof once more. 'Twould kill her outright, boy, to get news of thee too suddenly. But, come, Jack! Step in softly, after me, into the writing-room, where old Margery hath laid some supper for thee.

.

It was the old, long narrow room, where I had so often before chafed and fumed over my unwelcome tasks, but as I sat there now, in the subdued light that a pair of candles shed on the dark brown walls, I felt myself already a different being. My father, too, in the big chair by the window beside the table, all littered over with papers and plans and diagrams, was not the same father that I had left him.

I began to conceive, all at once, a certain kindliness for this old dingy apartment and all it contained, such as had never entered into my heart before, and, suddenly there arose in my mind, the self-same idea that Pius Æneas expressed to Dido, as touching the scene of his past misfortunes, "*Forsan et hæc olim me meminisse juvabit.*" Especially, methought when I shall come to find myself marooned on some desolate island; or floating about, mayhap, a solitary castaway on a raft at sea!

Thus and thus my wandering fancy fooled me; school translations and narratives of bye-gone sea voyages blending themselves fantastically together.

CHAPTER VI.

BETWEEN LIFE AND DEATH.

It was not until the afternoon of the following day was well advanced that my mother became fully awake, nor even then was it judged exactly prudent that I should present myself at her bedside. My good father accordingly made excuse to send me out to Luke Belamy, who lived on the side of the hill, just beyond the castle, so that my mother, instead of being suddenly apprised of my arrival, should be gradually prepared for meeting me.

This matter was entrusted to my mother's faithful old waiting woman, Margery Fox: and so gently, and with such tact and discreteness did Margery acquit herself, that when I came in at last, hand in hand with my father, there was no excitement of any kind, and I, who had been already schooled as to my proper behaviour, had fain to content myself with tenderly taking her by the hand that lay outside the newly smoothed and straightened white bedclothes, that, and kissing her on the brow and lips. Her eyes were so large and lustrous, and there was such a rich glow of carmine in her cheek as she lay back on the pillow gazing upon me, that something seemed to whisper me in the ear, as if to say "Far too fair to last," and in good truth she was ever a lovely woman; but as I saw her here now, I was amazed at the likeness she presented to Dame Dorothy over the chimney-piece in the great drawing-room.

Our words were but few, and delivered at intervals, but I was old enough to perceive in those temporary lapses of mind that she exhibited the effect of the sleeping-potion my father had spoken of; but, as she rallied, she always returned to her old self in fixing those marvellous eyes upon me, and these so full of love and light, and unutterable content.

My father drew me gently after him out of the room by the sleeve, promising me, as I followed, that I might come and sit with her on the morrow, provided I stayed not too long; but of the proper time therefore, Margery should warn me.

What may have been my dear mother's bodily pain I know not, but it seemed to me as if a certain shade of anxiety and sadness which she bravely shook off whenever I came in, had much to do with her disorder. Little did I dream then in the hey-dey of my existence, what her self-denial must have cost her; nor was I (though by no means an inconsiderate youth) exactly of that inquiring turn of mind that I could discover for myself how truly and utterly unselfish she was.

All she said was either touching her boy or his affairs, asking much about London, much also concerning Mr. Hopkins (my patron) and the saucy old "Devonshire," not forgetting even my kind landlady, Mistress Counsell, nor my two friendly and most estimable fellow-lodgers. More than once did she essay to enquire the time fixed for the sailing of the convoys, and the probable duration of the cruise: and, once after a long silence, asked me how I liked myself in the new uniform, what was the present mode of the hat, and the like. When not actually conversing, she would steadily fasten her great, eloquent eyes upon me, and, from the love and pride that found their best expression there I came to gauge (in some degree at least) the intensity of a mother's feelings; but their true depths I had never plumbed as yet. Had I done so, it is difficult to conceive how I ever found the heart to leave her till I had been first assured not only that her recovery was certain, but also that my going to sea was not a source of constant alarm and anxiety to her. My father on the other hand, had (I am convinced) but little uneasiness touching my new career. He had the idea that boys like cats flung out o' window mostly lighted on their feet, and further that if they chanced to fall after a different fashion, they still resembled cats in that they had nine lives. Nay! I believe (if ever he did give the matter a thought at all) it was but to forecast my speedy dis-

gust for the sea, and my final return home ragged and footsore after the fashion of the repentant prodigal in the Scriptures. Nevertheless, shrewd and justly observant as he was, he must surely have forgotten how much of the brave wooden-legged Captain Willoughby I had in me. Aye, and of Dame Dorothy too! who so greatly gloried in that timber toe of his.

My mother's health continued to fluctuate; the doctors and women about her giving us hopes one day only to shatter them the next, and thus it went on; the weather still balmy, and the sun shining in all his glory. Through the half-open casement against which was trained a huge mass of honeysuckle in full bloom, there floated mingled odours of mignonette, sweet-pea, and wall-flower, and the silvery twitter of summer swallows was in the air.

I had received (I think I must have forgotten to say) along with my appointment a whole week's leave, the which I had been given to hold as no small privilege. Five days of this precious leave had already elapsed; and, it was manifestly impossible that I could return to London, and get me thence to The Nore to report myself aboard the "Devonshire" within the time prescribed.

I was sadly harassed by this most untoward posture of events, and, with my mind ever agitated by so many conflicting feelings, doubts and disappointments, I began to realize at the early age of thirteen years, what were the cares of that world which the Almighty and my parents had called me to live in.

To leave my dear mother in her present condition, even though she implored me to do so, had been an act of sheer barbarity, to break my leave was to cease to belong to the Queen's Service—to get some extension thereof, a difficult enough affair on the spot; but, at this distance from the Admiralty offices, it seemed to me to smack of madness or impossibility, and as I lay in my bed a nights awake I would toss and tumble about, thinking of kind Mr. Barnaby keeping on my apartment at Mistress Counsell's at his own proper expense, and my obligation toward him growing heavier and heavier day by day.

I dreamed, too (whatever put it into my distempered fancy), that the moth had got into my new

uniform and that my hanger was so rusted that it was not possible for me to draw it forth from the scabbard.

Distracted and worn-out, I appealed (though not too hopefully) to my father, for I conceived that he viewed my project of a life at sea, with indifference, if not with positive disfavour and disgust. Howbeit, when I put the matter to the touch, I found him neither so hard, nor yet so indifferent, as I had at first pictured him.

My dear mother (and truly, he could refuse her nothing; less now indeed than ever) had counselled him to write to Coventry to her old schoolmate the member's wife, in the hope that she might possibly influence her husband in my behalf. My father accordingly wrote, concealing nothing; but owing to an entire chapter of accidents (tedious to relate in this place) the letter miscarried by the way, and by the time Mrs. Hopkins had written to her honourable husband in London he happened to be out of town. As a consequence, a whole fortnight rolled away, leaving us without news, but my dear mother rallying greatly, she insisted on my setting out for London, and prosecuting my fortune in person.

Though sorely tempted; nay! though strongly advised by those nearest and dearest to me to the act, my whole nature rebelled within me. I could not consent to tear myself from my mother,—but, when she gravely and moreover, firmly put it to me, *that it was for her happiness* if I would only go—I at last consented.

My dear mother was by this time (to all appearance) wonderfully better, sitting, propped-up in bed, with pillows at her back; and not only giving clear direction touching household affairs, but also ordering various little things for my comfort on the road.

CHAPTER VII.

SYLVIA.

Heavy was my heart and full when the day of my departure drawing nigh was definitely fixed.

I spent much more time by my mother's bedside than either Doctor Aston or Margery seemed to approve.

I would glide into the room like a shadow when she was awake, and oftentimes a-tiptoe while she slept.

On such occasions as the latter I never tired of gazing on her beauty with all my eyes; and being just of that age myself where the growing lad prefers a girl of twice his own years and more for a sweetheart, I came to consider what a happy man must be that father of mine in possessing so adorable a being for a wife.

And once when he took the opportunity to kiss her as he softly shifted and smoothed her pillow, I felt one little pang of something close akin to jealousy, a feeling it would take a better scholar than myself to define, and a wiser head than my own to set down aright by its proper name.

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At last my valise being repacked, and in addition thereto a bag full of good things provided for me to eat by the way, I began all my sorrowful leave-takings. Luke Bellamy and his boy, little John, I went out expressly to visit, also our neighbours the Hammersleys and the Herricks. At the latter of these places a grand discovery dawned upon me.

My mother's favourite, little Sylvia, whom I had been accustomed during the past few quiet days to see constantly flitting up and down our garden path, and in and out of my mother's room like a stray sun-

beam, now, with a nosegay, again with a little jug of posset, a tisane, or cordial of some sort, seemed altered in her behaviour towards myself.

Her's was ever a smiling, frank and fearless countenance. A sweeter face indeed I had never seen, whether in nature, or transferred by a triumph of the limner's art to the breathing canvas, and I who had so often aforetime sheepishly confessed to my mother, with gawky gesture, and a blushing cheek, to a certain liking for Sylvia, now began to find that Sylvia's old regard for me was bigger than I had ever dreamed of or conceived, but I also discovered that my change in life, and my visit to London, had builded up a fanciful barrier between us. I longed to catch her in my arms and kiss her, as once I slyly used to do in the garden, or behind the door, but she seemed now to fly my advances, and found her best refuge either with my mother or Margery.

Totally unskilled in the lore of love, I did not perceive in this very repulsion and fancied avoidance, the presence of a fixed and growing passion, but as the hour of my departure approached I could plainly see the sunshiny, merry little face cloud over, and twice (unperceived by her) I caught her watching my countenance; aye! and even overheard what might have filled a more experienced soul with rapture, a long-drawn sigh escaping from that innocent bosom. Margery rallied Sylvia, and with all the privilege of an old domestic, fired off at her such silly little pellets of wit as are most natural to women of her degree, adding like another Cassandra, that when Master John (bless his bones!) came back from the wars, a real captain, and with a sword upon his thigh, too! the very first thing he would do would be to ask Master Herrick for Miss Sylvia to wife! Hereupon would Sylvia bridle and take the pouts; while I myself with all my silly airs and London superiority could not avoid a blush. Margery's wit separated us more than I can well express, but when my time was actually come, and Will Swaine and the coach and four waiting in front of the "Dun Cow," I forgot all formality and artifice, and in the rare freemasonry of childish friendship and affection strained Sylvia tightly to my bosom.

Nor did she this time in anywise resist; and, when I had bid my dear little companion that last farewell, I perceived that her large and tender eyes were overflowing with tears.

I have made many experiences since that day of what some are pleased to style "the softer sex," but I never knew an honester, truer or more faithful regret than that with which poor Sylvia moaned "good-bye then, Jack, dear! and . . . God bless you!"

My mother's farewell unmanned me, as you may well suppose; but the two "God bless yous" rang in my ears and haunted me all the way to London.

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When I did get to London at last (which was only after a protracted journey, our coach having broken down by the way, and that, not far from Oxford), I arrived in a frame of mind vastly different from that wherewithal I had made my first entry into the great city, but I found my friends, Mr. Barnaby and Mr. Masterman, as kind and as thoughtful for me as ever. As for good Mistress Counsell (who had truly lost nothing by me during my absence) she received me most civilly, telling me I was welcome back again, and that I would find my apartment well-aired and nothing disturbed, as in fact the event proved. Nay! even Molly, on whom I had bestowed a bright new half-crown on my departure, now made me a droll little bob-curtsey, adding that she "ever loved to serve real gentlemen." But I only pished and pshawed, as I had noticed my elders do, and bade her begone for a saucy, wheedling little baggage!

Had it not been for two things; to wit, my continued apprehensiveness concerning my dear mother, and my fears with regard to my appointment, I should have been happy enough; for thanks to the foresight and goodness of my parents, I found myself the possessor of a draft on a London banker, and to such an amount as not only to satisfy what immediate claims I had against me, but also to leave me what then appeared a very handsome little sum at my own proper dis-

posal. Indeed, it was ever a maxim with my dear mother, that one should always keep a little silver in the purse in case of mishap, and to give away (where required) in charity, and never to spend the uttermost farthing, save when necessity compelled. In addition to all these funds were two brand-new guineas sewn into the lining of my jacket, most probably as I at first had fancied by Margery at my mother's orders; but in extricating these by the help of a small scissors that Molly had loaned me, out popped a little round, something wrapped in silver paper. 'Twas but a little heart of agate stone, slung by a thin flat loop of gold, attached whereto was a slip of parchment on which I found inscribed in childish characters, "When this you see, remember me!" and beneath this again the signature "Sylvia."

Mother had clearly employed my sweet Amaryllis (and Amaryllis; *my* Amaryllis was a Sylvia!) who had taken occasion thereby to send me a love-token likewise.

Old people affect to say there's a charm in agate; but whether this be superstition or no I lack the wit to determine; suffice to say, I have worn Sylvia's agate about my neck for years and the only real misfortunes that ever befel me occurred precisely at times when I had left it at home in my casket along with certain other of my little trinkets. But, a truce to speculation; Jack Rous was never a philosopher.

CHAPTER VIII.

“AMICUS CERTUS IN RE INCERTA CERNITUR.”

Mr. Barnaby, whose kind advice I sought in regard to my affairs, had had them under his strict consideration for an entire day; and, to afford him every advantage I told him all.

* * * *

Now, when a man be he young or old seeks advice or friendly counsel, it is generally a fact that he has made up his mind as far as possible in one direction or another already.

When the wished-for opinion is delivered, he receives it with a shade of sadness on his countenance should it fail to square altogether with his own view of the matter, but on the other hand, supposing the counsel he has sought to coincide with the position which he has taken up, then he congratulates himself upon his wisdom in applying to a friend whose ripe and practised judgment so completely confirms him in his own ideas, etc.

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My first thought had been to don my maiden uniform and present myself at the Admiralty to make my excuses in propria personâ, placing myself, there and then at the orders of the Navy Office.

To my then mind this course recommended itself strongly, for, said I to myself, “’Tis but an act of due respect. Furthermore, they will be the more likely to incline to my aid if I present myself with Her Majesty’s cloth on my back, and surely the narration of my dear mother’s sudden seizure, and all that I have come to suffer, thereupon will move their Honours to deal considerately with my case.”

I bethought me too, that the bare mention of the name of the Right Honourable Lord of the Treasury that had befriended us, would act in some sort as a sesame, and open the gates of the profession to me on the spot.

"Have you much hope then, my dear sir," said I, "that the letter I wrote at your instance will serve the desired end?"

"That," replied Mr. Barnaby, rubbing his nose (as if it were the lamp of Aladdin, and a true remover of impossibilities), "must depend upon a variety of circumstances. For example, whether your patron be in town or no, and if so, whether his attack of the gout be on or off. Then again there may be unwritten regulations applying to cases, just such as your own, and whereof, I, a simple civilian, know nothing. To be perfectly frank with you," he continued, pulling at the same time a crown piece from his pocket and jerking it briskly towards the ceiling and catching it in falling as he closed his palm over it with infinite dexterity, "'tis a pretty even toss up which way the matter turns out. If right, well and good, so—and I shall be delighted, Master John Rous, to have been of service to you.

"If, however, on the other hand, you should have chanced to draw a blank in the lottery of Bellona, there's no need, boy! to wear the willow, nor pull a wry face over it. The mercantile marine is open to all; and, if you should care to ship either aboard an Indiaman or a 'Letter of Marque,' I think I can find friends that might serve to help you to fulfil either ambition. As I seem to see it, the whole affair hinges on a very fine edge. You were appointed less to the Navy in general than to a particular vacancy occurring aboard the 'Devonshire.' Now, I may be wrong in this idea; but, supposing for example's sake that another young gentleman (say possibly an earl or a marquis) to have taken the post which you so unfortunately failed to claim . . . then, good-bye to the 'Devonshire.' And, as for the Service at large, your having broken your leave would prove no great recommendation to your getting another ship in a hurry.

“That your friends are great and powerful, I shall not attempt to deny ; but still I should be less than your friend, did I counsel you to build too hopefully on a speedy reinstatement.

“Wait until the answer to our letter comes in, and then we will knock heads together over it again.”

Methought Mr. Barnaby took too dark and too despairing a view of the matter, nevertheless I thanked him for his advice, promising if it would not be taking too great a liberty to bring him the letter so soon as it should arrive and take his opinion thereon.

CHAPTER IX.

JOHN AULDJO.

About this period I occasionally saw at Will's a very young man, seemingly of about my own time of life. A pretty fellow enough, and blest with a wondrous flow of animal spirits, but John Auldjo was just one of those whom blind chance had never as yet thrown in my way for an acquaintance.

I noted respecting his conversation (which I could not choose but overhear at times) that most of the phrases he employed smacked strongly of sea water. Such as, "making his first land-fall," "luffing up in the wind's eye," "coming to an anchor," "dipping his ancient," and the like.

He was used to descant on the late naval operations in the channel, and off the Dutch coast. Speaking familiarly of the captains engaged therein as "Bill," "Dick," or "Harry," or even with some quaint nickname attached, such as proved to me upon the spot how perfect and amiable must have been the intimacy subsisting between them and himself.

John Auldjo claimed to be of Scot's descent; but, being born as well as brought up in one of our own coast towns, Scarborough to wit, he resembled a Scot mayhap no more than I did.

The sorriest jokes cut at the expense of the land of his ancestors, he met with a smiling countenance; and never did I once hear of his being drawn into any unseemly brawl or quarrel in its defence.

"That country," cried he, one night, "which produced the Admirable Crichton and the immortal progenitor of all the Auldjos needs no defender here!" And, *looking* a mock-defiance at his opposite neigh-

bour, carolled like nightingale or lark a stave or so from the antique ballad of "Sir Patrick Spens"—

"Oh! where shall I get me a skeely skipper,
To sail that new ship of mine, &c."

And at the same time bestowed a morsel of right Virginia in the bowl of his little pipe, which, as yet however he forbore to light.

That cheery voice still wakes congenial echoes in my soul—but, tell me! where is brisk John Auldjo now?

'Tis no exaggeration to declare that this young gentleman's heartiness, his jovial, though by no means rotund, countenance, and the camaraderie he was wont to exhibit withal went very far towards captivating a naturally errant imagination—but my own personal vanity was destined yet to receive agreeable compliment at his hand, for Harry Redmayne, whom I now learned for the first time to be a friend and crony of the gay Mr. Auldjo, called on me at my lodging in Cornhill at night, and presenting Mr. Auldjo's duty, desired for him the honour of my acquaintance and friendship. Harry added, that John having seen sundry of my rough sketches in caricatura after the Italian method, on Mr. Hopkins's table, and recognizing there, his own sharp and clever countenance, intently investigating the "Evening Journal" at Will's, straightway conceived the project of making himself known to me.

Now, when two ardent young souls of congenial aspirations (such as were ours about this time) meet with the foregone intention of being pleased with each other, the event cannot be otherwise than felicitous—and I am (I feel) quite within the exact boundaries of truth, when I aver that I was as much delighted, aye! every whit, with him, as he himself professed to be with the unstudied creations of my pen and pencil.

Like myself, John Auldjo was a sincere, as well as a professed lover of the great eternal sea, and all pertaining thereto.

Also, like myself, he had been disappointed in his suit to that always beautiful and admirable, but, also,

alas! ever fickle mistress. We met at Will's, as had been already agreed upon, Harry presenting us to each other in a little speech so flattering toward myself, that I must forbear all further mention thereof—but let that pass!

We left the coffee-house all three together and made our way straight to John Auldjo's rooms in the Strand, not so very far from Charing Cross. I was more than delighted with these snug and pleasant apartments; the walls whereof were decorated with prints and sketches in every direction.

Over the mantelpiece was pasted a skeleton map of Scotland, whereon was traced an irregular angular figure in red ink, within which again (also in red ink) I found written in a firm up and down hand, "Hereabouts the Auldjo country." The vague yet absolute nature of which inscription at once amused my sense of humour and compelled my admiration. Three plain long deal shelves bore an honoured weight or antique lore—also treatises, tables, histories, voyages, and works on shipbuilding, not to mention naval tactics. Ever (for my own part) a lover of books, I made bold to take these down, one after the other, and experienced in some sort the glamour of a reflected glory as I read, facing the title in many of these, "To John Auldjo, Esquire, etc., from his attached and ever-admiring friend, so-and-so vice-admiral, or so-and-so commodore, and thus onward in and ever-descending scale to the humble individual who styled himself 'Lieutenant aboard Her Majesty's bomb-ketch "Skylark," presently off Spithead.'"

Reflected glory, I had said, for these gentlemen being friends of my friend John Auldjo, Esquire, were they not by inference, also friends of my own?

I took occasion here to remark a certain singular family-likeness in the hand-writings of all these naval heroes; and, moreover a certain tremulous and sea-going resemblance to the up-and-down hand on the map of Scotland over the fireplace.

John Auldjo, who had been meanwhile traversing the apartment with a light and springy gait, warbling snatches of maritime melody as he went, besought us

both "to bring ourselves to an anchor," the which manœuvre we promptly executed; Harry disposing himself in a big chair in the chimney corner, while I myself "brought to" on the end of the bed.

Here, at our leisure, we admired the various relics and curios which adorned the broad shelf of the mantelpiece and certain spaces on the walls. Shells, amulets, Indian bows and arrows, and oaken tobacco-stoppers turned from the timbers of celebrated ships; also the model of a seventy-four between two little silver candlesticks said to have been taken out of one of the vessels of the Spanish Armada.

But what arrested my attention more than all was a beautiful naval sword hanging by a loop from a golden-headed nail on the wall. Mr. Auldjo perceiving the direction of my gaze began to speak darkly, as in parables, then, under cover of the cloud of a variety of hinted remarks, gave me (albeit somewhat mysteriously) to understand that this noble weapon boasted a history that was intimately interwoven with his own.

But, on my expressing an increased interest in the noble weapon, and a desire to be further informed there anent, he adroitly turned the conversation, nor could I persuade him further to revive it that evening by all the artifice that I could command.

Save and except this one disappointment to a most laudable curiosity, I enjoyed the evening very heartily, and as all titles of ceremony were excluded from Mr. Auldjo's bright and pleasant apartments, I found myself constrained notwithstanding the nicer scruples of an early education, to address him as "John," to which indeed he had already challenged me, by styling me "Nick," "Old Man," etc. And this, with all the assurance of one who had known me ever since I was first breeched.

The very mystery that hung about John Auldjo made him an object of interest in my eyes, and his usual mode of speech, shrouded in metaphor, rather enhanced than detracted from the pleasure of the study that I chose to make of his character.

When I left him the night was spent, but the day

still young, however the renewed potations of right Nantz which I had thoughtlessly accomplished, while they made me feel "top-heavy" for a while, in the end, put new life into my feet, insomuch that I fancied my ankles bound about with the talares of a Mercury.

CHAPTER X.

MISFORTUNES NEVER COME SINGLY.

The excellent advice which I had received from my good friend, Mr. Barnaby, served to revive my drooping thoughts.

I followed his well-considered directions calling on the various gentlemen he had indicated to present my duty and to show myself from time to time as most suitable.

One night in the privacy of my own chamber, I arrayed myself completely in the uniform that had been brought to the lodgings before I was called back to Warwick on the news of my dear mother's illness; and surveying myself there and then in the mirror was as thoroughly enamoured of my personal appearance as was Narcissus of old when first he glassed himself in the crystal brook. I felt all the assurance and confidence which the Royal livery inspires, and but sighed for the time when I should find myself in command of a boat's crew of such sturdy fellows as I had seen so often of late, awaiting their officer at the Tower stairs.

My dream, methought, now began to draw nigh to its fulfilment and my happiness was the happiness of expectancy mingled with its attendant apprehensiveness; but I put away all my brave apparel in the chest, against the bright day when I should put it on for ever.

All went well with me. I had received no ill news during several days, and was myself in no humour to write home until I should be able to date from my ship at the moorings off The Nore.

I had attempted several times to indite an epistle to Sylvia; but, in sooth, never got much farther than "Dear Heart!" or "Most adorable of your sex!" when, testily tearing the paper up I deferred all further essays in this direction till I should be able in good earnest to write R.N. after my name.

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Mr. Masterman took me to the play both at Drury and Covent Garden, and where for the first time in my life I was presented with all the glamour and glitter of the Thespian world. With Harry Redmayne I also attended a bear-bait at Exeter Change, and afterwards saw two mains of birds fought out at the cockpit in Smithfield. These latter sports, however, proved but poor attractions for me, seeing I was neither naturally cruel nor yet too much enamoured of the evil and malign countenances I noted at such proceedings.

I had hardly bidden farewell to Harry on one of these evenings (it was as I remember at the upper end of Westminster road, and not very far from King Charles's statue), when I found myself suddenly knocked over, and unable to rise, my right leg being bent under me, and entirely benumbed. It was not long either, before I had a crowd of passers-by around me, and a person of larger common sense and humanity than the others, calling to his companions, raised me from the road, and bore me to a coach which stood hard-by.

As for the waggoner that had wrought me this hurt, he made off on the instant and was soon lost in the confusion and hurry of the huge thoroughfare. All pursuit after him being but vain, I begged the man who had played the Good Samaritan thus far towards myself to carry me to my lodgings rather than to the infirmary as he had designed doing, and to send me a surgeon without further delay.

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I was brought in, and laid on my own bed as I had begged that I might be, and the two stout fellows

who had carried me up, were dismissed with a shilling a-piece to satisfy them for their trouble.

My good landlady who came in with both hands clasped, and wearing a look of the utmost concern, trusted that no bones were broken. "I hope, sir, too," she added, "that you are not in much pain." "I have no pain, madam," replied I, "so long as I lie quiet like this; but I much fear me 'tis no common injury, for my poor leg is quite dead already." As I pronounced these words, I distinctly heard a short, quick sob coming from behind the door; and, turning my eyes in that direction, perceived Molly, poor, dear, tender-hearted little soul! with her checked apron to her eyes.

"Cheer up, Molly!" cried I, "'Twas nought but an ugly tumble after all. One thing only grieves me, it ought to have been done by one of the enemy's great round shot, you know, and not by a lumbering brewer's wain."

Hereupon Mr. Barnaby entering, took me kindly by the hand, and begged that I would command him in anything that might be for my comfort, and as I was motioning him to take a chair and be seated (the while shaping in my private mind the wish that he might remain by me a little time) the surgeon arrived.

He was a man of a shrewd countenance and pale complexion, with keen grey eyes, a Roman nose, and a mouth in which tenderness and decision, like misfortune's bedfellows, were strangely mated.

After a few questions and two or three pinches of snuff, he proceeded to examine me—but, finding it impossible to untruss me as I lay, he took out a pair of scissors from a large black leathern case of instruments, and ripped the seam of my muddy breeches open right up to the waistband. Then exhorting me to bear myself bravely like a man, he began with Mr. Barnaby's assistance to straighten out my limb, a proceeding which caused me the most exquisite agony: this, being in some measure accomplished, he grasped me round the lower part of the thigh with his two hands, and twisted the unlucky leg this way and that, until the tears that I vainly strove to restrain, coursed

freely down my cheeks, while a smothered groan escaped my lips.

"Broken, sir?" questioned Mr. Barnaby in a voice the anxiety of which I could not choose but observe.

But the surgeon continued his quest with an intent and immoveable countenance, and without as yet vouchsafing him a word.

Then, after a few moments during which I experienced one sharp and agonizing pang, I distinctly heard the crackling sound of the broken bones.

He desisted, and I laid back my head upon the pillow with a heavy sigh.

"Broken badly, sir, is it not," moaned I. ". . . I am not afraid to hear it." "Aye! boy,—broken indeed; and, an ugly fracture too, but we can essay no more till the swelling be past. Meanwhile we shall strip you as tenderly as may be and have you put properly and in due form to bed." "A little brandy, Mr. Barnaby!—not much—so! and taking the glass out of my kind friend's hand, and raising my head, he advanced steadily towards my lips. That's the last I remember of it.

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When I came to myself I was in bed and well covered up, and Mr. Barnaby beside me, bending over me with a troubled and pitiful countenance.

For the first time in my life I had fainted.

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"Is it a case for the knife, sir?" said I. "Hush!" whispered Mr. Barnaby, "you are to keep perfectly quiet, and 'tis Doctor Smithson's orders that you do not distress yourself one whit.

"Your limb, I take it, will mend in due time. There! keep an easy mind. This, I promised to attempt; but the ticking of a timepiece that Mr. Barnaby had placed upon the chimney-shelf to mark the watches of the night for him, and the strange shadows cast on the ceiling by the perforated metal cover that surrounded the night-light holder, filled me with strange

imaginations, while the gentle sighing of the little fire and the clink of the glowing cinders as they sank from time to time in the grate produced an effect on me such as will best be understood by those who sick or wounded nigh unto death have spent wakeful nights before the flickering lights and shadows of a sick-room fire.

The kind old Barnaby had spread his mattress on the floor and slumbered or feigned to slumber lightly, but I could perceive him getting on his legs at odd times and stealing up to the fender placing bits of coal in the grate delicately with his fingers lest the sound of the fire-irons should in any way annoy me.

And, though my eyes filled with tears of gratitude as I regarded him, I could not avoid a smile at the queer figure he cut, wigless, in long stockings and with both his knee-strings untied and loose as he stood with his back to the chimney-shelf, warming himself a little before getting back to bed.

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My landlady had asked the surgeon whether I ought not to be let blood, but he, being a man of original ideas, and jealous of all interference, behaved, as I much fear, somewhat crustily to my well-meaning friend.

The next day found me in splints and on a water-panado diet.

He stood (as I afterwards came to learn) nearly alone in his antipathy to the letting of blood) whereby, as he was wont to aver, so many were withered up untimely, or else sent worn-out to early graves; and reflecting now over this matter in my old age, I cannot but applaud the sagacity and shrewdness of this extraordinary man in thus cutting out a path for himself and adhering to his own thoughtfully digested opinions, despite all the prejudices of that, nay! even of the present day against his peculiar ideas and modes of treating the sick and wounded.

That Doctor Smithson was right, I most devoutly believe; for, in the course of a few weeks, I was advanced to the dignity of crutches. These frayed me

under the arms not a little at the first, but I soon became used to them, and in due time could pick my way through the little garden, supported only by a stout oak stick of Mr. Barnaby's.

At last I was nearly myself again, though, alas! with one leg somewhat shorter than the other, a circumstance which, while I gave thanks to God for my deliverance and recovery, filled me with mortification and sorrow when I came to perceive how it barred the way to my usefulness at sea.

I was venting my ill-humour one day against the untoward occurrence which, methought, had closed the gates of a noble profession against me for ever, when Mr. Barnaby, pulling forth from his pocket a copy of that Day's "Dyer's Letter," pointed my attention to a full account of the disastrous action just fought off the Cornish coast wherein Her Majesty's ship, the "Devonshire" (the very vessel to which I was first appointed) had been blown up with the loss of all on board, save two (now in the hands of the enemy).

My lamentable accident, first, and now the news of the awful catastrophe to the "Devonshire," caused me to feel, though without exactly understanding why, that further sadness was in store for me.

This time it came in the shape in some sort of the cup of Tantalus, for the late exertions and petitions of my friends and myself had at last borne fruit.

How sweet had been this fruit just before my accident came to occur! But now it only filled me with heaviness and misery as I contemplated it ripe and rosy, dangling in full view, but just exactly beyond my reach.

It was an order to report myself at the Admiralty with all convenient speed, as my case, having been duly considered, Mr. Hopkins having moved my Lords thereto, I was to join a ship of war of the new squadron now fitting out to rendezvous at Kinsale.

While plunged in all the deep dejection and vain

regrets which this gracious letter had occasioned me, and suffering also from racking pains in my recently healed limb, another letter was put into my hand by Molly, who, with kind enquiry after my health, and a little bob-curtsey made, whisked smilingly out of the room.

I had no heart to open this missive, and so flung it on the little table beside my couch for perusal at some more fitting time.

My reflections, as might be supposed, were not of a reassuring character. My road to glory almost hopelessly blocked and barred, I still owed a small sum to Mr. Barnaby. My obligations toward my landlady increased day by day, and, above all, what must assuredly prove a heavy account from Dr. Smithson, not yet come in, I began to find myself near my wit's end.

Misfortunes, it has been said (and I have used the proverb as a heading to this chapter) seldom come singly, and, no sooner does a bird of ill-omen alight on your roof-tree, than another, and a bigger one, flutters up to bear him company. These ideas I found but too well interpreted and borne out in the letter which I had delayed to open until now.

'Twas unlike myself in every respect to pass over a letter, and one with the Warwick post mark, too!

Nought indeed save a sense of politeness due towards others present, or some vague apprehension in regard of possible idle news that it might contain, could have succeeded in restraining a being so impulsive as myself. When I broke the seal, 'twas with a grave misgiving and a heavy heart. As I unfolded it slowly, I felt as if already a cloud of gloom began to overshadow me, and, spreading the pages out before me on the table, I traversed quite mechanically and with stony eyes, the chain of eventful words as it drew its weary length along, and closing the earliest period with a sigh.

Methought I had done the like before, somewhere, and in a dream, an evil dream, from which I had been aroused, but the sense whereof I had never since been able to shake off. I now began to recall my

sudden flight by the night-coach to Warwick, and Mr. Masterman's last words to myself as I sat beside Will Swaine on the box, touching the rumoured alliance between the French King and the Sultan of Zanguebar, so strongly do trivialities blend themselves with grief. But no such relief awaited me here, as once under the old lime tree in our own beautiful Warwickshire garden.

Here, now, alone in far-away London, on a tearful day, where the mist dimmed the window-panes and the houses and shops and streets were all a-drip, and enveloped in haze, an exile purely of my own act, yet too proud to turn back, I read the story of my dear mother's death.

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All that night I lay broad awake, my dear mother's face haunting me continually—not a dead face, sharply lined, drawn, and waxen (for as yet I had never beheld death with my bodily eyes), but my mother as last I viewed her, lying back dreamily on the snowy pillow with a waning flush of carmine upon her cheek, and that marvellous likeness to Dame Dorothy in the picture, that we had all so well observed and remarked.

It mattered not which way I turned upon my bed, whether with my face to the wall, or to the closely shuttered window, there was her face (not that I ever strove to be rid of it), but even when I buried my head in the clothes—there it was still before me.

Next morning I threw open my chamber window as soon as it was light, and read the letter over again most attentively. I remarked, towards the end, after a few just observations on the shortness of life, and an exhortation not to sorrow as others that have no hope (the letter was in the handwriting of the curate of St. Mary's, Warwick), certain directions for my guidance.

My father, he said, did not desire that I should return home as the funeral would be over before I could possibly arrive, and he held it best, as I had elected my own profession, to remain where I was,

and neglect no means of establishing myself therein. Then, after conveying his blessing to me in comfortable terms, and admonishing me as to the conduct of my future life, he bade me reckon upon him for all such reasonable sums of money as I might hereafter stand in need of, adding that a letter in his own hand would find me in the course of a few days.

I dwelt long over these sayings, and laid them all to heart, resolving, so soon as might be to confide my sorrowful news to good Mr. Barnaby, and beg him to add to the already-too-full measure of my indebtedness towards himself, by advising me how to act under my present heavy trouble.

Mr. Barnaby's concern knew no bounds when I discovered to him of what nature and how great was the last misfortune that had befallen me.

He spoke (as I had already predicted to myself) in a manner at once assuring and consolatory, offering me there and then such aid as he might find it in his power to afford, and this in few but excellently well chosen words. He counselled me further, so soon as I should begin to feel my leg sufficiently strong under me again, to seek some suitable employment on shore, urging that not only was it my duty to bow to the decrees of an infinitely wise, benignant and Divine Providence in renouncing all idea of a naval career, but also in my province as an honest citizen to set to work and learn to labour truly to make my own living in such state of life as it should please God to call me.

It was decided thereupon that Mr. Barnaby should help me to indite a letter to my generous patron, thanking him from my heart for his kind though, alas! unavailing good offices on my behalf, detailing the story of my accident, together with particular mention of the sad death of my beloved parent.

After that we had altered and amended this epistle to our own proper satisfaction, it was copied and duly despatched by a trusty messenger, as I did not choose to confide a missive of so great consequence to the post.

The letter was answered the same afternoon, a piece of promptitude which extorted marked encomium from Mr. Barnaby.

The reply was none too long, but expressed a kindness mingled with regret, such as spoke the Christian and the gentleman. It contained likewise a promise of protection and future favour, couched in such exact phrases as proclaimed the writer a man well versed in human nature and possessing an excellent knowledge of the world, at all events that was Mr. Barnaby's opinion.

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Though now divorced by force of cruel circumstance from my ever glorious mistress, the sea, I continued (slave that I was!) to love her with an ardour that was unspeakable, praying heaven that I might yet one day trust myself and my fortunes on her bosom, in any capacity that might prove good for me; though certes! all hope of becoming an officer of Her Most Excellent Majesty the Queen was at an end.

Still nourishing this secret wish in my heart, I suffered myself to be placed by Mr. Barnaby in the office of his particular friend, one Mr. Exon, who made considerable traffic in shipping, but chiefly with India.

The good Mr. Barnaby might, had he so chosen, have taken me to be with himself, but recognizing, delicately as well as wisely, that the inferior or subordinate position in the counting-house, and the equality in the lodging would never marry well together, and being further desirous of retaining our respective relations intact on the old footing, he decided on the kind and worthy Mr. Exon's as the office wherein I should first begin the world.

CHAPTER XI.

SIR CLOUDESLEY'S FUNERAL.

My duties in Mr. Exon's counting-house opened up a new world to me.

I began to get some insight into the mercantile affairs, and, thanks to my evenings at the lodging in Cornhill with Mr. Barnaby, to grasp an idea of the commercial relations of Great Britain with the various countries of the globe.

I studied diligently and with a keen interest, Vattel's Law of Nations, together with other standard works, whence I derived some knowledge of the special functions of plenipotentiaries, ambassadors, consuls and other public servants appointed to guard and watch over our interests abroad.

Then I was taught how to express myself, with more show of conciseness than is usual in ordinary correspondence, and to write a neat commercial hand free from the Italian flourishes so usually insisted on by those masters who simply instruct our green youth in the art of polite letter-writing.

Besides all this, I had to acquaint myself with the foreign money tables and the more expeditious modes of rendering French, Dutch, German, Russian and Spanish coin into English currency. But perhaps the most pleasant portion of my duties was that connected with the docks and shipping, and the multiform and varied formalities connected with the Custom House.

Here I made some degree of experience, practical as well as theoretical, and my constant visits to the river, boarding vessels from divers parts of the globe, watching the loading and unloading, the processes of the docking and undocking of Indiamen and other respectable vessels served to foster and educate that nautical taste already mine by inheritance.

Occasionally I would go of an evening with Mr. Barnaby or Mr. Masterman, or with both of these gentlemen, to the coffee-houses, they most affected such as Garraway's, or Lloyd's, or the Jerusalem, where the news on 'Change was most chiefly discussed and canvassed, together with that of arrivals from foreign parts, and the departures of convoys, besides the rumours of wars which at this time were almost continual.

This was varied now and then by a visit to Drury Lane or sometimes Covent Garden, and, returning after the play, where we might perchance have encountered Harry Redmayne and other friends, dropped in (as was Mr. Masterman's figure) at the Grecian, the Wits, or the already classic Cocoa-Tree, where, seated in a private box over a steaming dish of chocolate, we enjoyed for a season the rare converse of actors and of men of letters.

Here I had the honour (that is to say, at the Cocoa-Tree), of being presented to gentlemen of both services, the Navy and Army, besides Letter of Marque Officers full of all the life and adventure of the Spanish Main.

In this present year there befell a great misfortune to the nation in the loss of that most skilful and intrepid seaman, Sir Cloudesley Shovel, off the Scillys. What was Britannia's woe on this fateful occasion no tongue can rightly tell, no pencil adequately portray.

The funeral, splendid as well as most mournful, was followed by thousands of citizens, but it was not my privilege to behold more than the crowd that pressed about the bier, beaten back here and there and at all points, by squadrons of Dragoons and certain detachments of foot-soldiers, who kept clear the passage Westminster-wards.

This was the first time I ever had found myself in the heart of a great London crowd, and though pushed about and shoved and jostled at some danger to life and limb, it struck me as something almost too monstrous for belief, how that men calling themselves Britons could jest, jeer and posture, smoke and pick pockets, to say nought of getting up fights among them-

selves as our great naval hero was passing along to his last and honoured rest under the roof of the Abbey. Mr. Exon had given us all a half-holiday to mark his sense of the solemnity of the occasion, and our office, like most others of the Thames-street merchants, and the shops, too, along the line of march, had the windows closed and shuttered in token of mourning.

When I grew tired (as I soon did) of struggling about in the heaving and surging mob (for 'twas hopeless even to dream of getting myself into the Abbey precincts), I made my way down to the river where I witnessed the outer form or semblance of grief and respect as observed amongst seamen.

'Twas blowing a brisk breeze from the north-east, and every vessel on the stream lay with its huge yards a-cock-bill, its rigging hanging loose in festoons, and having the Royal Pennon and other colours at half-mast, the red-crossed ancient at the taffrail also blowing wildly about at the half-staff. Vessels of war, convoy and otherwise, fired their guns at minute intervals, while the snowy clouds of smoke that issued from the lips of the cannon, were hurried away astern by the gale and lost in air, just as so many pale and sheeted ghosts vanishing of a sudden into Avernus, but the thundrous booming of the guns was solemn and slow.

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It was not every day that I drank wine; in fact, I had then no great inclination that way, which Mr. Barnaby, observing, took occasion to remark that the taste therefor would come of itself, and that soon enough, too.

He also extolled the virtue of sobriety and descanted shrewdly upon the advantages of habits of frugality and moderation formed in early life.

Drinking, I confess it, was then, as now, a fashionable vice, and there was an abundance of wine and that of fair quality in the market; but Mr. Barnaby, while never in any way suffering himself to be carried into excess, drank always of the best, and indeed his position in an office connected with the docks made him

opportunities of always having a wine the like of which it was seldom my privilege to taste at other houses. So, when he begged me to break through "just for once," what he was pleased to term my rule, I felt I could safely aver that his liquor was more to my liking than other peoples'.

This night he made a short speech at supper in praise of that admirable hero whom he represented Britannia as mourning with bitter tears, and, filling his glass, passed the bottle to Mr. Masterman and myself, at the same time charging us to join him in silently drinking the memory of that glorious son of Albion, Sir Cloudesley Shovel.

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'Tis many a long year since that evening now, and the days have been diversified with stirring events both by sea and by land; but my impressions of the crowd, whose name had aptly been set down as legion, the ships all dishevelled in their mourning array on the river, and that drinking of Sir Cloudesley's memory are so closely linked together in my recollection that I never think of the one without recalling the other two.

After divine service on Sundays at St. Dunstan's in the West, and dinner duly despatched, 'twas my chief delight to wander at my leisure among the docks, and indeed generally by the river-side in places where my beloved shipping was most wont to resort.

My companion in many of these seventh day rambles was a young man, Holbrook by name, a clerk like myself in the office of the worthy Mr. Exon. Along with Dick Holbrook, would often come his sister Mary, a dark-eyed, buxom young gipsy in the very primal spring-tide of her existence.

There was a something in Mary Holbrook's voice that seemed to breathe in pastorals, and I seldom found myself in her society but I would straightway fall a-dreaming of the hawthorn in bloom, the fragrant garnet-berried bramble in the hedgerows, the lowing of contented kine, or the matin-song of the lark.

'Twas a disturbing influence enough, and that in more senses than one. First probably because the depths of my boyish nature were unconsciously stirred by the rosy beauty of my innocent young shepherdess; and, next, in that my soul already attuned to ruder and grander themes, wherein was Boreas piping hoarsely amid the spars and cordage of some storm-tossed convoy, found its best relief while tripping in imagination a rustic measure around a May-pole to the wedded melody of a pipe and tabor; and this, too, in some green and sequestered glade where every zephyr, as it sighed amid the leaves, breathed the gentle name of Mary.

It mattered little which way I attempted to divert the current of my thoughts in that strangely and idly delightful season of day-dreams. Either way I confessed myself spell-bound. The sea and Mary—Mary and the sea. To borrow a Horatian figure suitable to the fickleness of a youthful and too-susceptible nature, and adapting the same so as to meet the requirements of my own case—

“Wayward as the wind, by the sea I best loved Mary—when with Mary, the sea——

It was but yesterday that Mary and myself had stood together in rapt and silent contemplation of one of the proudest Indiamen it had been my fortune to behold.

A grand, tall, and handsomely decorated ship, mounting a dozen great guns on either broadside of her fighting deck, besides carrying sundry beaming brass pieces of smaller calibre on poop and forecastle. Her masts of a more than ordinary stoutness and altitude were builded up of divers portions, all hooped together. These, rising heavenwards, seemed to pierce the very sky, wherein her red-crossed pennons of Saint George floated and streamed out like silvern comets, with heads of rosy gueules. Spreading out overhead were the massive and far-reaching yards, with all their apparel and tackle, what strained and taut! what gracefully hanging in festoons! Between these (and, as it were, half-way houses on the road to heaven), stood the great round-tops fenced about with nettings, wherein the diminished sea-boy kept watch and ward.

Issuing from beneath the lofty bulwark of the fore-castle, the bolt-sprit proudly reared his defiant head mid-air, while below this giant spar, guarded by numberless crossing and recrossing chains and cordages, stretched the life-sized figure of some tutelary goddess in act to trip lightly over the pathless waves.

'Twas a most matchless and breathing piece of sculpture, in my eyes, and indeed, as I have since learned, a work of rare merit, as were certain of the great carven figure-heads of that day, especially in the Queen's Navy and in the vessels of the company of merchants trading to the East Indies; but, what had attracted and enlisted Mary's sympathies more than all we had as yet witnessed, was the capacious and grandly proportioned stern, pierced with gilded and many-curtained windows, and sculptured in the highest style of art.

To speak by the card, Master Grinling Gibbons himself need have never blushed to own the like. 'Twas the story of Tethys and Oceanus treated after the usual forms of classic allegory, sharply carven out of the good sound oak, and deftly overlaid with a dead white pigment. I had not been so long from school (and that a very respectable school, too), but I could explain to Mary readily enough what was the right history of these sculptured myths, also that it bore no relation to the short and boldly inscribed name beneath.

'Twas a name that I had good cause to remember in after years, as you may yet read at your proper leisure, but I ask myself to this day, does the Mary that used to be Sweet Mary Holbrook still remember the brave old "Forte" and that story of Tethys and Oceanus related by one John Rous in all the vain-glory of a schoolboy pride.

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What, between the people that he actually knew, and those whom he made-believe to know, John Auldjo must have been acquainted with pretty nearly half the world of letters and of fashion. Naturally of good address and winning manners, he improved every opportunity that presented itself and every advantage

he had attained to, but the fact of his being seen with one confessedly great man to-day, pretty surely paved the way to his presentation to another on the morrow.

His mode with a superior was full of deference, but still without one touch of that subserviency so distasteful to the truly great.

Myself he introduced on divers occasions as a young man, a friend of his own, and, like himself, fighting his way through the world, but speedily added some brief and pleasant epitome of my grandfather's services, by way of covering his protégé with all the glories of inheritance, and which truly won for me an attention and consideration far beyond anything to which my own humble individual merit might have entitled me.

I have ever found that the supremest wisdom consists in silence, and may therefore style myself in theory at least, a disciple of that transcendent philosopher, Zeno, and it is due in great measure to the restraint I was wont to put on my unruly member that I had not as yet any serious difference with my friend, John Auldjo, who, though fond of his joke, and for ever pointing admiringly to those who both gave and took jokes like true British sailors, was himself impatient to the last degree of any retort not proceeding from himself.

I had just been presented to Captain Woodes-Rogers, and, when the long roll of my grandsire's illustrious deeds was displayed, I was irresistibly reminded of the brand-new and hugely diverting story of Gil Blas of Santillana, which I had just been reading in the original French with Mr. Barnaby at the lodgings between supper and bedtime.

Need I mention the passage that occurred to me? 'Twas the little episode of poor Gil at Pegnaflor and the flatterer that he met at the tavern in that village. Nevertheless, I composed my countenance and held my peace, though greatly minded to show my humour, and, I dare swear, I have never since had cause to regret the sacrifice.

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From Captain Woodes-Rogers I got a most veracious and masterful narration of his visit to the little known

Island of Juan Fernandez, also of his acquaintance with the wonderful Alexander Selkirk, of the Cinque Ports Galley, whose name was but so lately on everybody's lips, and whose big jack-knife still hangs over the inner door of a Fleet-street coffee-house, where it continues an object of interest with the curious until this day.

By Captain Woodes-Rogers (who also did me the honour of asking me to sup with him at his lodgings in the Strand), I was introduced to one of the most remarkable personages it has even been my good fortune to meet. This was no other than Mr. Daniel Defoe. At this period of which I write, a pallid man, with high and well-marked features, a pair of wicked grey eyes, and one of the most monstrous wigs in all Cheapside. His phrases at first were few and curt, his manner constrained and abrupt. In fine, I shortly smoked him for a Radical. He was by turns querulous, dictatorial and complacent; but, after the cloth was removed and the wine began to flow, I was fain to alter my mind concerning his politics, and gladly joined him in drink the loyal and patriotic toast of "Her Most Excellent Majesty Queen Anne," with "Confusion to all Traitors."

"And yet, young sir!" cried he, looking over his spectacles, and shooting out his under lip (as was his wont and manner when excited), "I have myself stood in the pillory at Temple Bar for my opinions. Mayhap I myself was the man you figured as standing there with his neck in the wooden collar, when you, alighting from the coach, first found a footing on the stony ways of London. An it had been the collar of the Bath, sir! I could not have been prouder of that wooden necklace!"

CHAPTER XII.

MR. DANIEL DEFOE.

Hast ever considered, dear descendant and successor of mine, the progress of a colloquy, tracing back carefully from the latter phrases to the first and original remark wherewith the ball was opened? For my own part, I can scarcely conceive any study more interesting, any process more curious in analysis, nor indeed any investigation which rewards one more pleasantly for his pains. It takes its rise among the snow-capped peaks of formality, thence trickling slowly downwards as one topic suggests another. The mention of some particular country turns the stream of talk towards another with its traditions and history, and history conducts to personalities.

At this point the stream diverges delta-wise into a number of branches crossing and recrossing each other in all directions, and embracing little islands of fact at every turn, until at last the ocean, many sounding, turbid, and incomprehensible.

I feel emboldened to shape these remarks while reflecting upon my own after supper conversation with Mr. Defoe, some time manager of the great tile works at Erith, sometime (as I have heard tell) a haberdasher within the liberties of the City of London, but since one of the greatest authors of the age.

I had begun by narrating my first arrival in London on my way to my Aunt Tunstall's.

This had led up to Mr. Defoes reminiscence of the Public Pillory at Temple Bar, thence drifting into punishments. Captain Woodes-Rogers had furnished his quota touching "keel-hauling," "walking the plank," or being "flogged round the fleet," and the various tortures practised among the Indian tribes.

By an almost imperceptible and subtle transition, we found ourselves drifting from affairs purely naval,

into the science of geography, in which Mr. Defoe proved himself a most apt and accomplished student, and before we parted for the night, I was engaged to visit Mr. Defoe at his rooms in Fleet-street to see his collection of charts and voyages, but more particularly in regard to the great southern continent of New Holland, the coast line whereof Mr. Defoe's friend, Captain William Dampier, had explored for the space of several degrees.

Mr. Defoe considered the future of this immense island-continent as fraught with golden possibilities; and predicted for it a political importance not second even to that of our own North American colonies.

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I began to give myself up to the dream of a great southern continent, gladly embracing the idea of availing myself of Mr. Defoe's polite offer, and referring to all the books on the subject contained in his library.

It may be but a wild hypothesis on the part of our keen politician who takes his chief recreation in the realms of fiction, but he has assured me that not only will the Terra Australis one day be the great reservoir for all the surplusage of European peoples, but the granary of the whole globe and the treasury of the world.

There is a certain sense of fascination that attends Mr. Defoe's company, and as he warms to his subject, 'tis wondrous pleasant to observe how his pale face expands, reddens and rejuvenates; how he lays his audience, as it were, under some mighty spell, and how the oldest and the hardest sit silent around him in rapt attention, like children as they listen to a fairy tale by the nursery fire.

I found myself at this period rapidly imbibing a taste for belles lettres, and indeed I was seldom so happy as in the society of those rarely gifted men of letters (now, alas! no more), who were to be met nightly at Will's, the Grecian, or the Cocoa Tree.

Mr. Barnaby ever practical, and steadily looking forward to a partnership for me, a seat at Guildhall,

in good time as Common Council man and so forth, did not sympathize with me in my new leanings and likings so far as I could have wished, but rather discouraged me from courting or cultivating such society.

"Even Captain Steele," exclaimed he with some asperity (not like his wonted manner) "is no fitting comrade for thee. Ill habits and late hours attend all these coffee-house companionships, and for one ounce of literary knowledge to thy advantage thou shalt have to swim through a butt of wine; then there is the risk of quarrel, the probable appeal to arms, and (an I mistake not) the possibility of night brawls in the city streets with the mohocks. I had infinitely rather John Rous," cried he, "see thee delving for a livelihood, that, or plying a weaver's shuttle business; John, business is business, and until fortune be placated and won, and competence assured, 'tis but an act of folly to pin oneself to the skirts of a society so lavish and profligate as this."

"But, my dear sir," remonstrated I, "the Right Honourable Joseph Addison, that married the Dowager Countess of Warwick, is himself the bright and particular star of the society or firmament wherein Captain Steele best loves to shine."

"Firmament, quotha! Right honourable fiddlestick!" cries Mr. Barnaby in a mighty pretty taking. "A Lord of the Treasury may do just as seems most meet to himself; but as for his coffee-house comrades and dependents, sir! He'll often (I warrant) discharge their wine-scores himself, and to be plain with thee, John Rous, I should blush with shame to think thee beholden in like manner."

"True, sir," rejoined I (for I felt my independence pricked), "but as yet I have not the honour of the acquaintance of either gentlemen. The only author of any great eminence that has ever deigned to honour me with his notice is Mr. Daniel Defoe."

"Mr. Defoe" (exclaimed Mr. Barnaby) "can afford a whole world of drawbacks, and yet survive. His frugality is unquestioned, his means are tolerably certain, and his circle of acquaintances limited, but with all this he is opinionated, selfish, and dictatorial. Where he

is, conversation vanishes in monologue, the solitary speaker in this case being Mr. Defoe. 'Tis for this cause that we have set our faces against him at the Jerusalem, and not only on account of this bad habit, but because we neither liked nor quite comprehended his politics.

"Perhaps, you may never have heard how a certain pamphlet that he fathered was burned by the common hangman, and himself compelled to kick his heels for the better part of a day on the stage at Temple Bar, his neck being fast in the pillory the while."

"Mr. Defoe," replied I, with a smile, "has already informed me in this matter."

CHAPTER XIII.

CUM MARTE MINERVA.

Ours were stirring times, and as I revert to these days of my hot youth, I feel I speak but reasonably where I assert that I had never known the like before.

True! We had as yet no such grand naval battle as that which had cost my grandsire a limb, and gained him a wife, but we had accounts, week by week, of desperate and herocially contested actions in the Channel and elsewhere. The very atmosphere of the coffee-houses and news rooms was flavoured with cannon smoke, and the air of the city as one walked abroad was as inspiring as the blast of a trumpet. The columns of the "London Gazette" were one blaze of glory, and every scribe in the dingy and shabby offices of the journals became in some sort a recording angel as his gray goose-quill transmitted to imperishable fame the doughty deeds of Britannia on the wave, at the dictation of the Genius of History. The insolence of the Dunkirk privateers; our own wholesome castigation of the Mynheers that had refused to strike their topgallant-sails to our St. George's ancient on the high seas, and so forth. News such as these formed the staple of our everyday talk, and as a matter of fact it became impossible to visit any known place of public resort without rubbing shoulders with heroes that had already distinguished themselves be it by land or sea. Veterans of Marlborough's wars, besides those who had cruised not unprofitably against the Spaniard, both on the Atlantic and Pacific coasts of America.

I was personally presented to several distinguished seamen by John Auldjo, who by this time was found once more playing Pius Æneas to my Fidus Achates. From his stories, I learned as from a series of pictures limned in his own gay colours, a world about the Queen's Navy, and the more I learned, the more I

found myself repining against the all-wise and inalterable decrees of Providence. I was less a philosopher than he, for John (as I think I have already hinted) was a youth of an elastic as well as hilarious temper.

He was content, however, to look on from a safe distance, and sun himself in the glory of those in whose brave deeds he might have manfully borne his part had heaven willed it so. John's world was his own rare imagination, and his every employment and avowed aim but so much symbolism. Nevertheless, his was that rare art whereby he not only deceived his friend but himself, his "alter ego" being the hero of at least half-a-dozen unsung sea fights, but while I listened with avidity to these masterful romances, I nourished in my inmost bosom the most bitter regret for my own individual disappointment. One night in particular at a rout, whereto he had procured an invitation for his Fidus Achates, he indicated to me a handsome young fellow, Tiptree Willoughby by name, carelessly remarking, "There goes a man with your worship's coat on his back," and on my seeking some reason for this saying, he whispered privily in my ear, "That is to say, he is the same young man chosen to fill the vacancy made by a certain Draywheel that we wot of."

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From that day onward I watched young Willoughby's career with a strange interest, in which some sort of jealousy, quite unworthy of a Christian and a gentleman, blended itself with a sadness such as everyone must feel when sighing after the unattainable.

As I fear me lest I should take up too much space with the circumstance and many details of my own not too eventful youth, I shall advance a little more rapidly, merely noticing on the march such events as leave some actual mark upon my history.

I was at work in earnest by this time, and as Providence had decreed, no longer a dependent on the bounty of my father, whom I was enabled to repay the various moneys advanced to me from time to time. Everything prospered with me, but I had still the old unchangeable love and desire for the sea, which nothing

could shake, and I still nourished the old hope of going one day to sea in some capacity or other, if only as super-cargo in one of Mr. Exon's Indiamen, but while I dreamed on and chalked out plans for a flying survey of the globe from China to Peru, certain chains were forging for me (all unknown to myself) to bind me to my native land. Mary Holbrook, with whom I had long been on brotherly terms, began, to my great mental distress, to discover a regard for myself beyond anything I had ever dreamed of inspiring, and her brother Dick, a clear-sighted fellow who, while devoted to me, was as jealous as an Englishman can only be, for the honour of his family. I noticed a strangeness in his manner, marked by a certain appearance of indecision, as if he had somewhat on his mind, but hesitated yet awhile ere unbosoming himself of the same.

This, coupled with the anxious and almost careworn expression of Mary herself, fairly set me a-thinking. Now, I had done nothing that any young man could reasonably reproach himself withal, but I began on examining myself, to plead guilty, both to the susceptibility of heart, and the unguarded language of a young man who lives but to please, and has nothing to conceal. John Auldjo put me to still greater tribulation by taxing me in bantering tones for having trifled with the young affections of Miss Holbrook. I believe now 'twas but an arrow shot at a venture, but it got at me through the joints of my armour, for I verily believed that if John Auldjo had mistaken my regard for Mary, for the tender passion, it was more than likely that Mary herself must now begin to reckon me a heartless young gallant who only amused himself at the expense of her dearest feelings, and John Auldjo did not mend matters much when he added, "And poor Sylvia, too. Out upon thee, Jack, for a butterfly lover."

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But when will man learn to be wise? I had confided to John in all the chivalrous faith of a boyish friendship, the story of my love for Sylvia.

Had I not also shown him the little agate heart that I usually wore about my neck; and had we not (both of us) toasted her times without number, when John, at his modest lodging on Saturday nights, gave us "Sweethearts and Wives," after the most approved nautical fashion.

But John, by his subsequent conduct, though he had at first expressed a holy horror of inconstancy, and the vice of double dealing (the fellow could preach with all the gravity and unction of a Sacheverell), gave me to understand that I had not sunk in his estimation one peg. The which when I took to heart, I experienced some sense of relief, reproaching myself at the same time with being of a somewhat over-whimsical and fantastic imagination.

I resolved to be more on my guard in future. I also determined sans advice from Pius Æneas, on two great things. First and foremost, to seek an interview and explanation with Mary, and next to write to Sylvia as soon as possible thereafter.

CHAPTER XIV.

A BRIEF APOLOGY.

Writing, as I do, from memory, it will seem small matter for wonder that I should have devoted so large a space to the story of my youth, but I fancy my descendants (such of them as may have attained to mature years) will agree with me on reading this my record, that a man remembers the *res gestæ* of his green and salad days with a vivid distinctness altogether different from that which attends the recollections of the more advanced period of middle-age, which being surrounded by so many distracting influences, and permeated with such a sense of struggle, may, though it leaves an outline generally correct, be yet lamentably deficient in point of colour.

A sober, if not sadly tinted affair, somewhat after the manner of our sepia sketches.

Were this book of mine intended for the public eye, I had abridged or curtailed my earlier reminiscences in favour of those of my riper years, but as the work such as you find it, is for mine own, I fear less being taxed with the garrulousness so frequently attributed to old age, than if I had written for the world at large.

Wherefore I purpose giving a few more of the warmer-toned pictures of the period wherein I kept living on in spite of sundry disappointments, fully possessed of the idea that by some rare and seemingly preposterous adventure, I might win fame at a leap, and live happily ever after, like the prince who won the enchanted princess in the fairy tale.

CHAPTER XV.

WHEREIN I WRITE TO SYLVIA.

During all this bout of philosophizing I have said nothing of Mary Holbrook, nothing touching my own pretty Sylvia, whose little agate charm I still continue to wear about my neck. With regard to Mary, I had been ill-advised enough to practise a species of procrastination, trusting to time to remove what impression she might have received, and heal with his sleep-restoring balm such wound as she might bear, supposing her to have sustained any. Do not imagine from this that I bore an altogether easy mind either.

I had not written for Sylvia for months, and my conscience pricked me sorely on this account, then all my philanderings with Mary rose up in judgment against me, and devoured alike with remorse and a vexation which I strove in vain to smother I began with all the fervour of one who desires flat impossibilities to wish myself on the Spanish Main or it might be somewhere far away in the South Pacific, thus discharging all my liabilities with a flying topsail.

So summoning all my resolution after a night of dire unrest I jumped suddenly out of bed, and commenced a letter to Sylvia, but my ideas followed each other in such rapid succession that the pen refused to keep pace with my thoughts. After much tearing up and burning, beginning and re-beginning, I at last completed a missive to Sylvia, full of penitence and promises and excuses, I also told her therein all concerning my heavy disappointment, my broken leg, my new office, and also (to be perfectly fair) the whole of the story about Mary Holbrook. The letter I conveyed to the post myself during the course of next forenoon, and feeling my bosom thereby relieved of a

load of apprehension, I devoted myself to the duties of my business with no small alacrity, whistling over my work as I wrote. News came to me this day that Dick Holbrook had notified Mr. Exon of his strong desire to leave (should the same prove convenient), as he had been offered a position in India.

CHAPTER XVI.

I FALL IN WITH STRANGE COMPANY.

This intelligence gave a new direction to the current of my thoughts. I could not but connect it in some sort with the imaginary slight I was supposed to have put on Mary, an idea which caused me the liveliest disquietude and the deepest possible concern.

The real truth, namely, that Dick Holbrook was in any case going out to Bombay to join one of the factories there, only dawned upon me later in the day, and when I learned that he was to sail by the "Forte," Indiaman, which was under orders for a week's time hence, I made up my mind to break the ice, and speak to him about the voyage and his future prospects in India, and so forth, thus leading up to some explanation in regard of Mary.

At first I discovered him cool and even civiler than I had liked. By degrees I got him to talk, but there still seemed, as it were, a something rankling in his bosom, which found expression in the tell-tale features of his countenance.

I managed with a huge effort to say all a man could say (in my circumstances) and promised to come down to the river in good time to witness his departure, but he received this friendly advance on my part coldly, and without much show either of interest or gratitude.

Dick, cried I (unable to bear it any longer), I pledge you my honour before heaven, I have never said aught to your sister that has exceeded the modest bounds of a respectful friendship, but if any gossip hath made a mountain of a mole-hill in this matter, why, 'tis no affair of mine.

"Women," rejoined Dick, coolly, "are not apt to be led by the opinions of others, gossips or no gossips. They possess that fine natural tact and shrewdness in

their own proper natures, which at once grasps and tests the friendships of the opposite sex.

"There never was a true woman yet who was taken by surprise in an offer of marriage.

"A woman reads everything that is coming as readily from a man's countenance, as you or I would the time of day from the face of a clock."

Well, then, exclaimed I, not a little amazed at his evident learning and skill in these matters, Miss Holbrook must have been then unlucky enough to have looked me in the face as I was meditating on my old flame and playfellow, Sylvia Herrick.

In respect and regard for your amiable sister, I yield to no man living, cried I, but surely 'tis a terrible mistake, Dick, to say that I have ever made love to her. Not but that she is a most lovely and loveable young lady altogether, and well worthy even the affection of a Prince of the Blood.

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He gave way by degrees, but yet like one who is only half convinced. However, when I came to relate to him how I considered myself bound to my Sylvia, both in honour and in love, he relented, and taking me by both hands, begged my forgiveness for all the doubts he had expressed both in word and act, adding that nothing short of the love and duty he owed his sister had ever prompted him to act as he had done.

Thereafter he agreed to explain the case thoroughly to Mary, and the matter dropped.

Dick called me back as I was taking my departure to say he thought it best I should not come aboard the "Forte," but rather take my final leave of him in the counting-house, to the which I more readily agreed, conceiving as I did that he might have some more private friends of his company that day. Nay! very possibly, Mary herself.

The days that succeeded the departure of the "Forte" were full of heaviness and sorrow for me, and for the first time that I can remember I began to seek consolation rather in the society of young and gay com-

panions than in that of the thoughtful, sober and ever-kind Mr. Barnaby. As a result I had during one half-holiday exhausted nearly all my slender stock of pocket money, what in treating my friends, what in distributing an ill-judged charity among certain beggars, whom having repeatedly passed, leaving them empty-handed. I now felt bound to present with something in full of all arrears.

I found myself thus by night wandering about in Fleet-street alone, there halting for a few moments in front of a cook-shop of the coarser kind, I surveyed the victual set forth in the window.

The fare looked wholesome enough, though not too inviting, and the savoury odour which issued from the doorway, half overcame the resolve I had framed of giving my stomach a holiday until to-morrow.

'Twas my last sixpence, and I felt as I groped for it in my deep vest-pocket, as guilty, mayhap, as does he about to desert a friend or bewray a benefactor.

At this juncture I became (I know not exactly how) distinctly conscious of a pair of very keen grey eyes being fastened upon me.

He that owned the eyes (a young and elegant fellow) was arrayed in a suit of scarlet, trimmed with gold galoon, and by the style of the wig, which was a somewhat full one, even for the Ramlies fashion, and the hat richly laced and looped up with gold, and the great sword upon his thigh, I took him for a military officer of some condition.

The stranger continued to regard me, talking the while to himself as though from habit. "Pshaw," quoth he, "'tis but a beggarly sixpence that stands (poor soul) between Elysium and thee. Out upon me for a miser. and I refuse thee the last stiver at the bottom of my purse. And looking on me again with a greater show of benevolence than I remember to have seen in the face of humanity since my dear mother died, he advanced towards me, snuff-box in hand, and taking a pinch himself, extended it to me with an air which methought had done no disgrace to the proudest court in Europe.

I bowed, and taking myself a pinch of the small dust,

as though I loved tobacco in that guise, was in act to carry it up to my nose, when suddenly lifting his hat, he stepped aside and vanished in the crowd.

Whereat, being fairly in a maze of bewilderment, I cast about in my mind for the reason of his thus signally failing in his charitable intent as expressed towards myself, but presently took comfort in the reflection that he had but spoken as a benevolent nature had prompted him, though being poor for the present as Job himself, he could not do that which he would.

I found it ill work arguing with a sharp-set stomach, at but eighteen years of age, so cocking my hat fiercely over one eye, and putting on that silly armour of defence that poverty ever useth to shield her shame withal, I stalked into the shop, and demanded a platter of boiled beef with vegetables.

These victuals were quickly got ready and set out on a clean little white deal table behind a screen, whereon were fastened bills of the play; item, announcements of mains for the coming cock-fights; bull-baiting news from Moorfields, as well as a full, true, and particular account of the most wonderful apparition of one Mistress Veal, published by Daniel Defoe, gentleman, a citizen of London.

When I had despatched with all the speed that attends a youthful appetite my platter of smoking hot beef and carrots, I laid my knife and fork pensively the one beside the other, and gazed soberly and thoughtfully upon the void that myself had made.

I must have sat some minutes thus, with my new laced hat across my knees, when the drawer approached to enquire of me whether a tankard of mild October would be to my honour's liking.

The bare mention of this excellent liquor, and for which indeed my soul was longing, was sufficient to rekindle the thirst still smouldering in my throat, but I knit my brows, and answering him shortly (and it may be I fear me, but with scant civility) laid my last sixpence in his palm, and without stopping for the change (a copper or two at most) rushed out again into Fleet-street and the fog.

Nor did I stop to look back on the soft, warm orange

light that stole through the steamy panes of the cook-shop window, but buttoning my coat across my chest, took my way down the street, I knew not why nor whither.

"Pshaw!" murmured I bitterly, under my breath, and mocking the tones of the voice that had raised my hopes so high only to dash them again to the ground.

"Pshaw! 'Tis but a beggarly sixpence that stands, poor soul, 'tween Elysium and thee. I would not an I could, refuse thee."

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The gay and sentimental gallant still present to my mind's eye, appeared to be but the harbinger of another individual, such as is the darkly banded pilot-fish to the ravenous and awe-inspiring shark. Here befel an adventure so strange and so singular in all respects, that I cannot forbear from relating it at length in these poor reminiscences of mine. I found myself suddenly seized by a figure in a long grey great-coat or roquelaure and vizor. This personage, clapping his hand all at once on the hilt of his sword, ordered me in what appeared a feigned or forced voice to submit myself silently and follow him, the which being completely off my guard and perplexed in my mind besides, I did. We had hardly got to a little clear space (since builded over) which lay between the Bolt in Tun tavern, and the old clothes shop kept by the well-known Jew, Lemuel Farkas, than the personage halted me, and drawing from his bosom a silver whistle, blew thrice upon it softly, introducing a peculiar trill towards the end of the blast, such as the boatswain uses aboard ship.

At this signal (for such it proved to be) four stout fellows, emerging from the darkness, pounced upon me, and in obedience to a nod from my original captor, hurried me, spite my desperate resistance to a hackney-carriage that stood drawn up close to the kennel, and only a few paces distant from us. These rudely pushed me into this conveyance, themselves following me, among whom the man in the vizor, but there not being

space for more than four inside, one was fain to mount upon the box.

I could not catch the name of the place of our destination as muttered to the driver, who to all seeming was as big a villain as any among them, but he drove us up and down the peaceful lamp-lit streets of the city in the boldest and most impudent manner conceivable. Even past Mrs. Counsell's own door, where I distinctly saw good Mr. Masterman in cloak and cape, ascending the front steps, probably after an evening at the Grecian. I was about to cry out lustily and raise the watch, when one of the two figures between whom I was placed, quietly pulling a horse-pistol from the girdle he wore about his waist, presented the cold muzzle thereof against my left temple, at the same time threatening to blow out my brains if I made the smallest demonstration.

This, if it failed to cause a panic, certainly quieted me down, and I passed the remainder of what truly appeared a circuitous journey, in silence. At last the coach stopped in front of a mean and sordid-looking edifice in a back street, which was extremely narrow. Over the doorway hung a battered and rusty oil lamp, which barely gave forth light enough to show me more than the general shape and configuration of the entrance to this infernal den.

From the talk of the vagabonds who dragged me into the building and up a narrow and remarkably steep flight of stairs, I smoked them for sailors, and it flashed upon me suddenly and full sorely too, that they meant to clap me aboard one of the "Letter of Marque" craft presently departing for the Spanish Main, either that, or else to sell me for a slave on one of the West India plantations.

They swore roundly, cuffed me in the mouth whenever I essayed to speak, and finally shoved me, neck and crop, down a little flight of steps on to the hard floor of a dark cell, whereupon, speedily retreating, they made off.

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I heard the key turning in the wards of the lock, also the sound of wheels as the coachman set off at

full speed, and the drip of water from some leakage in the roof of the noisome den.

Thanks to Providence, I was not really much the worse for the rough handling I had experienced, and I managed to dispose myself in a tolerably dry corner, where I presently sat me down, clasping my knees with my folded hands. It seemed as though a year had passed over my head (so great the force and persuasion of fancy), that if not an entire year, then say, three-quarters of an hour, which space truly hath, all my life appeared to me yet longer (as waiting goes) than even the full hour itself. 'Tis an old saw but never the blunter for that, which advertises one that "things never come to the worst, but they take a turn for the better," and a mighty comfortable doctrine for all it seems a paradox. A knock at the dör of my cell, speedily followed up by the turning of a key in the lock, and the entry to me of a figure in a long blue cloak, much like that of a dragoon. He was a man of jovial air, smiling withal and blessed with a big nose of his own, fiery red as that of Bardolph himself, all the which I now made out by the flare of a hurricane-lantern which he bore aloft in his left hand. "Going the rounds," quoth he. "My custom always of an afternoon. I bethought me to look in and see whether or no we had a bird in the trap, and by cock and pye! here we have him." After eyeing me up and down with a measure of concern, in which some trace of amusement found itself, he addressed me as follows: "Cheer up, comrade; follow me." 'Twas surely a scurvy jest, but you are only as one of a hundred that has the luck to be let loose on a banquet night, a banquet night, my good sir, of the 'Birds of a Feather,' known otherwise as the Guild of the Sons of Neptune. Come, this way, comrade." Whereupon taking me by the hand, I extended in all good faith, for I was indeed heartened by the fellow's genial air and manner, he led the way. Next we ascended a staircase together, and passed into what proved to be an ante-room giving off the main landing. "Thrift, thrift, comrade. Time flies and waits for no man, whether seaman or land-lubber, wherefore, use despatch, for to-night we both of us are bidden to the banquet. Pass in there," he

added, pointing as he spoke to a half-open door that almost faced us where we stood.

"There shall you find laid out ready for you suitable garments, a basin of clear water, and a bit of glass on the wall, to give you assurance of a changed condition withal, but use despatch." I obeyed him on the instant, and upon entering the room, which was lofty and plain, but well lighted, I found with all the joy of a first discoverer, a clean white bed, with dimity hangings, a dressing-table and a couple of chairs, item, a full flask of the fragrant "Water of the Antilles," with a stopper of cut crystal of marvellous beauty. Here I got rid of the miserable exuviae of yester night, washed and dressed me in a mighty becoming suit of royal blue laid out for me on the bed. The bit of glass, truly a modish oval mirror, with gilded candle-arms complete. Here I found in a drawer left purposely half-open, a new broad black ribbon, with the help of which I tied up my hair afresh, and after buckling on the dress-sword that marks the wearer for a gentleman, and taking a new laced hat under my arm, surveyed my new self in the mirror with a sigh of the purest gratitude and content. Extinguishing the lights, I returned with all convenient speed to the ante-room.

Here I found my friend and deliverer stroking his chin with one hand, while he reflectively knocked the ashes out of his tobacco pipe with the other. Rising from the big cushioned chair into which he had flung himself on our entry, he again looked me up and down, and this time I remarked with the full and complete satisfaction of having been himself the prime mover in my metamorphosis, "En avant!" (as Jack Frenchman hath it), he cried, and together again we two fared to the landing. A few paces then to the right and we found ourselves facing a grand doorway at which stood a servant in livery.

Advancing with a respectful salute, he divested my companion of his cloak, and receiving from him a card, showed us in together.

And a mighty proper person was my sponsor with the jolly Bardolph nose. Laced and brodered and buttoned over breast and collar and cuffs, and with a

naval sword at his hip, in the pommel of the hilt whereof blazed a magnificent brilliant. The hall was filling, but not full. Casting my eyes around I noticed above the great chair of the president, a grand pair of red deer antlers of many tines, which straightway minded me of John's deer-forests in the Auldjo country. These flanked by a buxom and withal comely figure of Britannia drawn over the foaming waves in a scallop shell by spouting seahorses. By this and another representing Venus Cytherea rising from the sea—a life-size figure this also, a prodigious fine woman too, though (methought) but very lightly clad, considering the situation. The other paintings (of which many) were chiefly of sea fights, with much of battle-smoke and bunting. Between every pair of these I noted stars of cutlasses and boarding-pikes, such as I had before remarked on a festive public occasion in the city, the entire effect mighty taking. Presently a buzz followed by a general hush. A number of gaily apparelled men marched up two abreast towards the chair, escorting a notable in blue and scarlet, buttons and lace, the shoe of his scabbard making rare music as he clashed along bowing right and left, bowing and bowing, so he clashed and clinked along. A loud cry, and a rousing round of cheers, when someone conveniently posted for the purpose, shouted in a voice like to that of a boatswain hailing a top in a gale of wind, "His Excellency the Admiral is seated. Gentlemen will please be seated also."

My noble friend and rescuer beside whom I sat, whispered me that the chaplain was about to sing grace. All this passed and excellent well. We addressed ourselves to all the savoury viands and dainties with which we were plied by the servants, themselves kept trotting backwards and forwards constantly between the carvers and the guests. Much buzz or converse, much clinking of silver and glass. Then the toast master taking post, and in a voice that penetrated the farthest recesses of the hall:—"Silence, Gentlemen, if you please, for a toast. Are your glasses charged? Charge your glasses! Gentlemen, 'The Queen!'" This brought every man to his feet. "The Queen!" "The Queen!" "The Queen!" repeated from mouth to mouth

like a feu de joie. Then all together in concert, followed by loud cheers like to shake the roof down. The next toast pronounced in due order after that of the "Queen's Navy and Army, and Church and State," had been duly honoured, was by my noble friend on my right. Rising to his feet, as the toast master announced him in ringing tones, and raising his brimming glass till level with his brow, surveying the entire company with an eagle-like sweep of vision, he gazed steadily, yet respectfully, across at the beaming figure in the chair.

"Gentlemen, brothers, sons of Neptune. I give you 'His Excellency Our Right Worthy Admiral.'" To which he added much in regard of his exploits by sea and by land, joined with expressions of loyalty, respect, and goodwill. This toast was rapturously received and honoured, nay! wound up with a flourish of the bugle and a ruffle on the drum. I had but barely observed the musicians as I entered, packed up as they were in a lancet-shaped alcove in the wall, situated just above the chair. A brief hush followed, and His Ex——, but no! the voice, the figure, the ensemble, as Jean Crapaud mouths it, was—was John Auldjo's. It was certainly mine own old John, he and none other. But His Excellency was by now on his legs in reply. Keen, incisive, witty, bubbling over with merriment, eyes flashing, and yet with a certain mock dignity pervading the entire oration. For me, I do protest. I never had had my John at his very best till now. I followed him phrase for phrase, marked the elegant as effective pose of hands and arms. But while acknowledging personally to my noble friend on my right, he added his sense of indebtedness to him in that he had that night secured for him yet another "Son of Neptune," who having had the bad luck to have lost his binnacle and compass overboard, had been box-hauling about and generally working Tom Cox's traverse on the high seas until, taken in tow by my honourable friend, he was thus brought safely into our harbour of refuge here. To this he was graciously pleased to add his own particular regard for me, and how that he had had me well under his eye ever since the time I was no taller than three-ha'porth of coppers

or about the bigness of a Mother Carey's chicken. More too of other purport with a praise of my supposed talents and abilities, such as brought a blush to my brow and a feeling of distress withal.

Other speeches followed, and as the small hours approached we began to shift our positions, each man drawing in close to some crony or intimate for the advantage of a closer touch and more convenient speech. When by a given signal from the Admiral, due permission was accorded, we began, almost everyone of us, to burn incense in the shape of right Oronoko to the manes of that great and most gallant seaman, Sir Walter Raleigh. Spirals and circlets of blue smoke began to ascend to the stout oaken rafters of the hall. Just then, His Excellency the Admiralissimo, catching my eye, privily signalled me to bear down and lay myself under his lee, the which I right willingly did, getting round the table and into a chair which happened then to be empty on his left. "Nay! not the weather-side, comrade," cried he, "Snug in; snug in there, under the lee. Your seat be ever on my right." Making him a sea-bow, such as I had known him mostly affect. I, on the instant, surrendered the left-hand chair to another "Son of Neptune," who eyed it expectantly. When "making a stern-board," as John would have said, I got me round by the back of the big carven chair. Now, it so fell out that at this moment, the orchestra perched behind and above the chair, began a prelude, whereupon and when it was well finished, a comrade with a voice at once full, round, rich and mellow, besides clearly modulated, commenced to sing.

'Twas a song the like of which one might have heard in some brave dream, and having heard, lost it nearly all again, past power of restoration save for the melody thereof. Yet here was it and with me once more, the same rare music, and the same brave words. Filling me as with the joy of a long-lost friend restored to me on the instant, a circumstance which in my humble opinion, not the keenest philosopher of them all could venture to explain. Strange, but even now as I write, I am unable to give more than the two first lines of the song. Would it were mine to scribe the

fitting remainder, but no. John Rous lacketh altogether the skill to build the lofty rhyme. The two lines I have rescued from oblivion, run in this wise:—

“When Triton winds his wrinkled shell,
And echo wakes in every wave, . . .”

Thus far, but alas! no farther. The air which still continues to follow me most plaguily is but a poor service, hum it howsoever correctly as I may, for I am weighed in the balance and found wanting in so far as one might reckon with the gifts of notation and harmonizing. The song mightily applauded whether by cognoscenti or the humbler sorts, was followed by a simple ditty sung with much sentimental effect by the Admiral himself. It was announced by its first line—

“When Mary trips across the green.”

A quaint little bit of simplicity and currently whispered as a composition of the singer's, regarding the which I, nevertheless, had my own doubts.

To this succeeded a fanfare on a trumpet and a rousing ruffle on the drums, whereupon a mariner, completely equipped, and followed by two others with trumpets, and tabards thereto attached, bore along a splendid loving cup, in shape a “Nef,” which is to say the modelled form of a galley, in this case curiously wrought in silver and brilliantly burnished withal. Presented over my left shoulder and nigh to a touch, to the Admiral, who raising it by two beautifully-moulded ears or handles to his lips, took one deep and copious and joyous draught. This during another noisy fanfare and rattle of the drums, louder even and eke better and longer sustained than the first. Here, I was minded in a flash of that passage in “Hamlet,” wherein the King drinks. “And let the kettle to the trumpet speak, the trumpet to the cannoneer without, the cannon to the heavens, the heavens to earth; now the King drinks to Hamlet.” For here I found myself wantoning and wool-gathering among pleasant and happy play house memories of the past as John put

the "Nef" tenderly into my hands. Likewise drinking, I found the liquor mightily to my taste with a certain smack of Mr. Barnaby's excellent Madeira, yet forebore beyond a sip or two, as I minded how many sailors had to be served ere the saucy "Nef" should make her port again. Natheless, neither I, nor yet any of the "Sons of Neptune" that followed me, were treated with fanfare or roll of drums to memorize our drinkings.

With the return of the beaming "Nef" as empty now as erstwhile nigh brimming over, it was borne off shoulder-high by its sailor guards, which indeed proved the signal that all formality was at an end. Which seeing, we disposed ourselves all over the hall, forming ourselves into little knots or coteries, with a bottle and glasses à leur portée. Songs reverberated from the answering roof, songs of the sea, sailor's love songs, anchor and top-sail-haul-yard songs or belike, chanteys, while clouds from long, lily-white clays hung over the scene as battle-smoke over the blue what time His Excellency General-Admiral Blake had made such capital finish among the Mynheers or the treasure-galleons of the Spanish Main.

The company broke up in the grey of the morning, shouting, swearing, chattering, singing, tumbling over one another like schoolboys, into the street.

John in his ordinary wear and wrapped in a long, blue cloak, that I seemed to know, leaned none too lightly on my arm. He complained at the first of a head-wind, the which inclined one to pitch and toss, and confided to me in what he designed for a stage-whisper, as we zigzagged up the paving-stones of Chepe, that owing to long service afloat he had come to lose his regular old land legs. Again, that with the wind a couple of points abeam, and beginning already to draw ahead, it compelled tacking, whereas with the breeze dead aft and a tolerably smooth sea, 'twas mere matter of scud, though even so, the steering was apt to be a bit plaguey at times.

"Ho! Helms a lee! Tacks and sheets! Mainsail haul! Round with her! D'ye hear?"

Upon which (and apparently missing stays), he bumped me and himself right up against his own front

door. The watch (two of them), with staves and lanterns, and muffled from head to heel, approached and passed, shouting in a long stressed tones, "Past three o' the clock, an' a fine starlight mornin'." These good fellows paid us no heed, indeed for my own part I had no wish that they should, while I came to be in such straits to rouse the house without undue noise and get our Admiral well under cover. Safely I got His Excellency to bed, and leaving him more than half asleep, with the great map of the Auldjo country on the wall above him, I retired myself, got home to my lodging at Mistress Counsell's, and being well weary, so to bed.

I dreamed the Triton-song over again, setting new words to the music, anon, losing the thread of my story. Getting to sleep only to wake again with all I had saved from the wreck in murmur on my lips.

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"When Triton winds his wrinkled shell,
And echo wakes in every wave. . . ."

CHAPTER XVII.

MENTOR AND TELEMACHUS.

I resolved in all things to show myself worthy of Mr. Barnaby's friendship and confidence. To this end I stayed more at home a-nights, employing the time in study and profiting by his conversation and instruction. As a consequence, I observed a certain growing coolness in the manner of my younger and more jovial companions, particularly John Auldjo and Harry Redmayne, the one rallying me on a supposed love affair, and the other circulating an improbable story touching my reading Divinity with Mr. Barnaby, in the hope of shortly becoming a clerk in Holy Orders. I do not mention it as a fact, but I believe I acquired more literary learning sitting by Mr. Barnaby as he smoked his long pipe of Virginia in the quiet evenings at home in one month, than I had ever gained in the space of six in the society of those two gay young comrades of mine. But I regretted the sprightly and witty converse of the coffee-houses, with all the bright and joyous associations of life in London by night. I missed the gay colouring of the social scene and the variety of character once so frequently before my eyes. The arguments, the songs, the very altercations and quarrels, the familiar place that had become my own by right of being always there, the attentive waiter and drawer, the lovely and neat-handed Phyllis, whose rosy cap-ribbons had grown (so to speak) out of my own pocket, the bright lights, the steam of the tea tables, the mingled odours of oranges and Madeira, and the aroma of the new-fashioned tobacco rolls or cigari-tos, fuming between the lips of the scarred and bronzed veterans of the Spanish Main.

I thought on all these things and sighed, but what I chiefly missed was the privilege of hearing such

men as the Right Honourable Joseph Addison, and Captain Richard Steele at their happiest and best.

Mr. Barnaby, observing my deportment as soberer and more staid than according to my usual wont, took occasion to rally me thereupon, adding that nothing could be really more absurd or foolish than running to extremes. "While on the one hand," said he, "I would counsel you never to affect the society of those with whom you cannot keep pace, nor incur obligations such as you cannot hope to repay, on the other hand, I see no reason why you should not occasionally visit the play house, or show yourself at a rout. Everything in reason and in season, John. And remember, always within due bounds."

CHAPTER XVIII.

A LETTER FROM SYLVIA.

I had to suffer in more ways than one for that most absurd frolic in which I had been but an unconscious actor.

Mr. Barnaby, methought, looked coldly upon me, and Mr. Exon, with some show of annoyance, took occasion to speak reprovingly in the matter of my hand writing, in which he discovered signs of negligence, as also an absence of my customary neatness. 'Twas but a mere hint, small, however, as it was, it proved sufficient and I bent myself once more to my daily tasks, and that more after my former manner than I had done for weeks together, wishing women and convivial societies and my Pius Æneas in Erebus. But I soon attained a more equable frame of mind.

While sitting one day in the counting-house engaged on certain Indian correspondence, what should be brought to me but a letter for myself with the frank of our county member thereon.

'Twas from Sylvia. I *knew* that, ere breaking the wax of the seal, which was marked for want of a better impress, with the tip of the dearest little thimble in the whole world.

I made excuse to go out. I read and re-read my precious missive, and disposing it safely in my bosom, waited to be alone in order to ponder over it yet further when more at my leisure.

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Yielding to my solicitations she had forgiven me everything, and proposed ratifying a peace between us on condition that I wrote her once a week, with a full and true account of my doings and adventures.

She put sundry questions to me touching my companions, and particularly desired her duty to Mr. Barnaby, of whom she spoke as playing Mentor to my Telemaque, and not a bad simile for a country-bred damsel neither. Beside myself with delight, and completely engrossed with the one idea, I busied myself at home in writing a long and ardent epistle to Sylvia, wherein I assured her of my eternal constancy, describing her as the lode-star of my eyes and the light of my existence, and having concluded with other elegant flowers of rhetoric filched from the gardens of Parnassus, I stole across the apartment to Mr. Barnaby's table, whence borrowing a stick of his reddest wax, not only sealed it in due form, but also managed to drop thereon what our maids at Warwick used to call "kisses" and three of these.

Mr. Barnaby (as I think I mentioned before) had counselled me not to run into extremes, but to show myself abroad occasionally. So it came quite as a relief to my feelings when, just after the despatch of my epistle to Sylvia, I received a note from brisk John Auldjo requesting the pleasure of my company to a rout at a grand house where he enjoyed the privilege of introducing a friend. The note was full to overflowing with jollity and kindly feeling, and concluded by trusting I would not leave a brother sailor in the lurch.

This allusion to the strange society into which I had been hoist on somebody's petard caused me much merriment, but the postscript, wherein he added, "Have a care; for the Lady Araminta (more beautiful and malicious than ever) is anxiously expected."

Of course I promised to go, nor did in any way dread the blandishments of the redoubted Lady Araminta so long as I kept my Sylvia's little agate heart about my neck.

CHAPTER XIX.

WHEREIN I DISCOVER A BLOOD RELATION AT LADY FROTHINGHAM'S ROUT.

From John's modest lodgings to the scene of festivity at Kensington was a pretty long drive, but we had a most comfortably cushioned and roomy coach entirely at our disposal. We amused each other by the way with droll relations of our several adventures since the last meeting, and, thanks to this proceeding, arrived at the lodge gate of the mansion much sooner than we had anticipated.

Punctual as we had flattered ourselves we were, we had to abide for some considerable space in the queue of a procession of vehicles with its attendant footmen and torches.

And when we did at length dismount from the big coach, John, whose temper was waxing threadbare, was not, be it known, in the most amiable of humours. You may see too much as well as too little of your friend, and the idea arose in my mind as I regarded him what must be the position and feelings of a wife under circumstances such as my own at that moment.

At the big glass in the ante-chamber John's spotless cambric neckcloth had to be untied and rearranged, and as he struggled about in a mighty fine tantrum one of his grand knee-buckles gave way.

A man-servant had to be summoned at once, for John at home and John under the roof-tree of a grand mansion, bless you, were men as different from one another as Philip sober from Philip drunk!

"See that you make this ship-shape, square and all-a'taunto, sirrah! D'ye hear?" cried John, with a magnificent air, assuming vastly on the strength of his fine new laced clothes.

The man obeyed, but as it seemed, at all events, without either alacrity or much goodwill, while John fumed and fretted over the delay.

For my own part I did my best to pacify John, but only made matters all the worse when I observed that supposing the man were slow, he was not so much to blame, not being a valet—besides that it did not become him so to rate a serving-man under his own proper master's roof. But John, by this time well-nigh as scarlet as the footman's waistcoat, did not deign me further answer than by looks of spite and mortification.

"Come along!" at last he cried, pulling on one glove testily as he spoke, and bursting it thereby right across the thumb and back, "we are late, sir! A world too late; the dance has already begun. I had hoped to present you before Lady Frothingham opened the ball."

At this juncture John espied among the crowd of later arrivals a grand old gentleman in scarlet and gold and a Ramilies wig pressing towards the same goal as ourselves.

At sight of this distinguished personage John's countenance undergoing a sudden transformation began to beam all over with smiles. "Ah! General," he exclaimed. "Permit me the honour of saluting you. . . . Back from the Hague again! and so soon. 'Pon my life, an anyone had asked me, I should have most incontinently declared I had never missed you from the Mall this past fortnight, and yet you have been across the sea to Holland and back. Poz! 'tis simply prodigious! And how did you leave his Grace?"

The General, for such his uniform betokened him—a heavy-looking man, but with a very quick brown eye and shrewd expression—vouchsafed but few words in reply, conveying his acknowledgments for the most part by an impatient movement of his white-gloved hand.

It wrought me pain to note the fact, but this highly-bred and distinguished officer, of whose acquaintance John was so justly proud, appeared himself to set but small store by John.

He eyed me also, but I met his keen glance fearlessly and without uneasiness, as I was not conscious of having in any wise sinned against the canons of

good society; much also (if I may be permitted the remark) because mine was that confidence which an entirely new and faultlessly-fitting suit inspires.

I had just so much lace as I though befitted a person of my condition and no more, a goodly show of fair linen and cambric, and I wore on my left thigh, for the first time in public, what was considered to stamp the gentleman in my young days—a dress sword! I had often worn a sword before in sport, besides I had been taught to wear and walk with one decently by Monsieur L'Estocade, the travelling fencing-master, when he visited Warwick and attended our school.

Altogether, I never felt more at ease in my days: the atmosphere, the society, the apparel, everything seeming to fit in as naturally as though I had grown up here from a child.

But John, if at all put out by the General's cool disdain, was wise enough to conceal it under as placid and immovable a countenance as I ever remember to have contemplated, and his "bonhommie" came back to him rapidly as he exchanged laughing salutations with dozens of elegant macaronis that we rubbed shoulders with as we passed in.

Once in the grand ball room John took me completely under his wing; and he was Pius Æneas and I Fidus Achates again in a twinkling!

There was a transformation in myself as well, for, while secretly taxing myself with some want of charity toward the foibles of another, I began again to fall so exactly under his influence as to fancy him one of the bravest and prettiest fellows at the rout.

He wore more lace than I, besides having a superb hilt to his sword, and, with the exception that his silk stockings might have spanned more prosperous-looking calves, I could readily imagine any young woman taking a fancy for him on the spot. On this, as on many former occasions, he dragged in my illustrious grandfather's services and doings with Admiral Blake in the days of the commonwealth, and I soon began to learn that it was not altogether an unprofitable affair to have a grandfather at all events so gallant and so distinguished as my own.

While I record this fact I am led to reflect that it is both right and just that it should be so, for had my grandfather been a man of bad or doubtful reputation, I had had to bear my share of the reproach as being his descendant.

Considering further over this matter as I stood leaning against a pillar and disposing my lame leg to the best advantage, I came to the conclusion that it was unwise—nay! impolitic—in a man to plume himself too much on his descent or to prate of his family in public, for I was struck there and then most forcibly with the idea that I had no more of real credit in the gallantry of that noble grandsire of mine than I should have had of actual dishonour had he been a person of evil or dissolute reputation.

God gives us all grandfathers, but we are not responsible for our own appearance on this earthly scene, and, while I trembled to think on what reproach I might have been (however innocently) called upon to bear, I felt a lively sense of thankfulness for the reflected honour, which, though all unsought by myself, yet served to gild and irradiate my humble career.

"You do not seem to be dancing, Mr. Rous," said Lady Frothingham to me as she passed, holding the hand of the old general officer I had previously seen in the ante-chamber. "Alas! madam, no," I replied. "I am as lame as Vulcan when he fell from heaven. But 'tis a long story, such as I would be loath to inflict your Ladyship withal. The worst of it is I shall never be better, and it has proved a bar to my embracing the noblest profession under the sun!"

"Hey! and what may that be?" interjected the General. When I, immediately remembering that he wore a scarlet coat, while the most ardent object of my own personal ambition had been the blue and gold of the Queen's Navy, sought refuge in an evasion, and, looking him straight in the face, replied, "The profession of arms, sir."

"I congratulate you on your wit and address, Mr. Rous," exclaimed her Ladyship laughingly. "You have made a fine point, sir!"

"This, General, is the same young gentleman that

made so notable an escape of being blown up in the 'Devonshire.' Mr. Auldjo told me the entire story, but I had fancied the lameness was an affair of the past, and that we should soon see Mr. Rous following worthily in the footsteps of his gallant grandfather."

The General, to whom her Ladyship presented me, spoke with great kindness and good feeling, adding that he doubted not but that a young man coming of so good a stock would yet prove as fair an ornament to one of the peaceful professions as he might have become to Her Majesty's service in the actual practice of the art of war.

"You play, of course!" added her Ladyship, as she gathered up her long skirt in the hand that held her fan. "My nephew Tiptree shall find you out presently and conduct you to the lansquenet party."

"A good thought and a happy," said the General, smiling, as they passed onwards. "Only take my advice, Mr. Rous, I am now an old man, and I have always made it my boast that I never played higher than sixpenny points. Perhaps we may have some further talk on this subject at another time."

CHAPTER XX.

IN THE SWIM.

As her Ladyship left me outside the gay and glittering throng, bowing to this one, pausing to say two words to that, or waving a passing recognition to another with her fan, I resolved, for the present at least, to waive the compliment of the lansquenet party. To be brief, I had found metal more attractive among the dancers and those that sat or stood (like myself) gratified spectators of so gay a whirl of enjoyment and youthful activity.

From my cradle upward I have ever manifested an observant nature, and it has been my main delight to foster and improve by practice this talent committed into my hands.

Nothing seemed to escape me this night, the scene affording to myself at least more than the experience of half a young life spent outside the world of fashion.

I noted those of the pure blue blood with the naturally easy air of those born to be great, yet more than half weary of greatness after all. The self-made man—stiff, self-reliant and strong in his own resources, but come to the front somewhat late in life; his gold-laced coat not sitting too easily on his broad, round shoulders, and his sword-hilt a mere uncomfortable projection that he found amazingly in the way. The middle-class "cit"—respectable, rosy and rotund, with much fine white linen, but in sad-coloured clothes, and a wig of a mode more formal than common; also his stout and prosperous-looking consort, and his plain but happy-featured daughters; a son or two along with them, growing up into manhood and out of their small clothes.

Then the true fine lady, "La Belle Dame Sans Merci," besides a bevy of younger damsels (city-bred), who

act *at* her, and copy her, too, at a certain safe distance, according to their own taste and the natural quickness of their perceptions.

The real Adonis or Exquisite—clean-limbed, leste and elegant in all his movements; the undeniable air wherewith he stoops, picks up and restores a handkerchief or a lost fan, is a study in itself; but to him the ordinary *petit-maitre*, who minces his oaths, dallies with his sword-knot, or bores you with receipts for the new “water of the Antilles” sovereign for the complexion, or some account of the late illness of the Right Honourable Mrs. Battersby’s pet poodle, Fidelio, this macaroni-fellow (I say) bears the same relation to your true exquisite as does the militia train-band to the regular forces, or the nonjuring dissenter to the jolly though always dignified and orthodox divine.

Those that seemed to bear themselves more nobly than most were the gentlemen of our Navy and Army who had served abroad, whether in Marlborough’s wars or against the French and Spaniards on the high seas.

Even among those who could boast of nothing grander than a virgin-shield I noted an air of mingled intrepidity and gentle deference, such as is born only of good society and strict discipline—two sources of restraint which none but your born gentleman can suffer with equanimity.

As I turned over this matter in my mind while contemplating the scarred and bronzed frontispiece of my friend, Captain Woodes-Rogers (the same who had some time since presented me to Mr. Daniel Defoe), who should advance towards me with the most perfectly well-bred air imaginable, but Mr. Tip-tree Willoughby, my Lady Frothingham’s nephew! I observed that he wore a brand-new uniform with broad lapels, fresh in all its resplendent glory from the embroiderer’s hands.

“Mr. Rous, I presume,” said he, “permit me the honour, pray! Lady Frothingham has deputed me to conduct you to the card table. . . . That is to say, of course, unless you should choose to amuse yourself otherwise.”

Perceiving that I appeared to hesitate between my desire to be perfectly gracious in accepting the proffered civility, and a certain wish I nourished of further watching the curiously instructive scene before me, he added, "But, perhaps you don't play? For my own part 'tis but seldom that I touch a card, and I don't yet know the difference rightly between Pope Joan, and Beggar-my-neighbour. So, in fact, if you really don't play, I can assure you of my entire sympathy. I was cured of cribbage sir, when I was yet but a boy, by having perforce to play night after night with a certain deaf old aunt of mine, a remarkably adroit player, who simply tolerated me, and counted aloud, 'Fifteen-two, fifteen-four, and one for his nob.' Methinks I hear her now!"

On my professing a detestation of cribbage quite equal to his own, we came to converse on a series of other topics, wherein we found ourselves mightily in harmony the one with the other. I adored the sea, and again lamented my shortened limb. He, for his part, averred that he simply *endured* the sea, and might possibly lose a leg, if not his head, in some sea-fight, and that at a day perhaps not far distant.

"For my part," said he, "I never loved the sea so much as before I came to serve afloat. Now I am glad of every excuse or chance of leave that I can get, to come ashore and shake my leg to a fiddle among the girls." And so, running on (for the fellow had a glib tongue), he discovered, to my huge astonishment a relationship between ourselves through the female branch of the house to which I belong.

"You, then, are one of our Willoughby's," cried I. "And you are the most absolute knave I ever met," he exclaimed, "to claim the Willoughby's (*our* Willoughby's, I mean) as your own private property!"

"But," he continued, "I like your humour, and if you will only permit me the honour, you can confer no greater favour on me than your personal and particular friendship."

Being by nature impulsive (alas, often foolishly so), as well as of a grateful disposition, I extended my right hand to my newly found, though, be it known, somewhat far-away kinsman, who returned

the pressure with a sailor-like heartiness, which went to show that there was no nonsense about Master Tiptree.

Here, then, was I, actually a blood relation and an inmate of the mansion, yet solely indebted for my presence under the roof to John Auldjo!

Tiptree Willoughby, being in request elsewhere, smilingly waved adieu, and passed on.

Meanwhile John Auldjo, joining me, offered me his congratulations on my self-command. "'Tis, I protest," quoth he, "absolutely Spartan, when I come to consider that it is your proper uniform which now so handsomely adorns the person of Master Tiptree Willoughby!"

"You astonish me, John!" exclaimed I, "but I remember well your telling me once how you had seen what you were pleased to call *my* coat on the back of that poor young fellow, afterwards blown up in the 'Devonshire.'"

"Yes, so I did! And—and since that young man Tiptree Willoughby succeeded to the very vacancy caused by your accident. Tiptree has had the glorious luck to smell powder since, and is airing his newly won uniform to-night—a junior lieutenant!"

"Well, John," quoth I, gulping down something which, had it survived, might have become a sigh, "we won't grieve too much over that, seeing the uniform has not gone out of the family."

"The family! Quotha! What on earth art dreaming of my Fidus Achates?"

"Mr. Willoughby," rejoined I, "though a far-away cousin, is still a cousin—an actual blood relation!"

"Ho! Ho!" laughed John, his face all of a simmer with amusement, "we are at our genealogies again, are we? Next turn of fortune's wheel and John Auldjo will be numbered among the ripening fruit that hangs upon the family-tree."

"By no means, John! How should that be so? The Auldjos of your ancestry, being Scotsmen, had no more dealings or marriages with us English, than had the Samaritans with the Jews of old."

"Ah! Ahem! But since——?"

"Never!" cried I, with animation, for I had the whole pedigree, nigh by heart.

"Come!" rejoined John, with all the air of an oracle, "I knew it all along. 'Twas for this very end, my Fidus Achates, that I planned it, so as to bring you two together (if you will credit my discretion) though without seeming to do so. I only trust you may continue fast friends, and I know you won't forget to think of me sometimes, when you have all that powerful Frothingham influence at your back."

"I never forget friends, John!" I replied quietly, but here I stuck fast for lack of words. Something seemed to suggest to me that where he appeared to warn me against a possible future act of ingratitude, he knew full well that 'twas Providence, and not John Auldjo, which had contrived this meeting, though he now attempted to wrest the whole affair to his own ends. John (ever a keen physiognomist) seemed to read my passing thought upon my countenance, for his own expression again underwent a change, as he repeated in a low voice that he hoped and trusted I might be happy. For his part 'twas the greatest and happiest effort of his days to have become the instrument in this most opportune affair, etc.

His manner, again disarming me, I fell to reproaching myself in that I had harboured unjust suspicion; and, being determined absolutely to right myself with him, I not only held out my hand (which he clasped with much fervour) but, further, drawing his arm within my own, marched thus along with him outside the row of massive pillars that separated us from the dancers.

"I have a great pleasure in store for you yet," added he, with one of his bright and knowing looks. "I must really do myself the honour of presenting you to the Lady Araminta."

At the mention of this name, I remembered the postscript to John's invitation, and, now being fired with a laudable and ambitious curiosity, desired him not to delay my introduction another moment.

As we threaded our way through the crowd I

noticed a monstrous fine woman in the very height of the mode, standing behind a pillar, in animated converse with the same old General Officer whom I had previously seen in the ante chamber.

"Mr. Auldjo," I heard the lady say; "that is he certainly, walking with the lame young gentleman yonder." "Methinks" (I overheard the General remark), "I could like the lame young gentleman best alone." "That is to say, you don't admire our Mr. Auldjo, General?"

"Nay! Madam. I say naught, an he be a protégé of yours. But you will be graciously pleased to understand that it is with Mr. Auldjo and myself, as between the man in the old rhyme, and a certain Doctor Fell."

John was busily engaged all this time in talking with a pretty young creature having two black patches on her left cheek; and so, 'twas in the light of an immense relief to myself to know that certain remarks never intended for my ear, had at all events escaped his.

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N.B.—Of the Lady Araminta in a further chapter.

CHAPTER XXI.

"THE LADY ARAMINTA."

We had not advanced far before John came to a halt in front of a rosy-faced, happy-looking young fellow in a plum-coloured suit, laced about the lapels, and pocket-holes with silver. He wore black silk stockings with sky-blue clocks, and a flaxen wig whose curls were in the most studied disorder.

"This is my most particular friend, Mr. Nicholas John Rous, that you have heard me speak of before," said John, with a neatly performed inclination of the head, such as he was ever wont to use withal when he would be seen at his best. "And as he is going to be presented to the beauteous and distinguished Mrs. Carlyon, I thought I could hardly serve his interests better than by leading him to you. You will doubtless easily bring to mind, sir, the great battle off the Bill of Portland, where General-Admiral Blake . . ."

"Pon honour!" lisped the youthful exquisite, with an air of perplexity which, to say the very least, was most admirably put on, "I never do, I protest, read history nowadays. History to me, sir, is naught but an inconceivable medley of kings, queens, paladins, and executioners. . . ."

Here he paused, and drawing forth from his vest pocket an elegantly chased amber snuff-box, began to tap it on the lid, as if in search of some further inspiration.

"And courtiers," added John, to supply the hiatus, "'Tis to you gentlemen, whose proud privilege it is to bask in the smiles of that transcendant beauty which surrounds a throne, that history owes so much of her magnificence and grandeur. You, too, are the most consummate actors in all that artlessly artful intrigue, which insensibly merging into diplomacy,

sways with all the exacting requirements of a despot, the destinies of an Empire. . . ."

Hereupon, John gave me an almost imperceptible jog with his elbow, and a provokingly comical glance out of the tail of the eye nearest to me.

'Twas an awkward, not to say painful, position for myself, and I began to experience a sense of shame and mortification in being thus conducted to a go-between that cared naught for my acquaintance, with a view of getting me presented to a lady whom I had previously taken for an intimate friend of John Auldjo.

The beau replied with brevity, but also with the most perfect politeness, assuring John, with meaningless courtesy, of his highest consideration, etc.

When John, suddenly espying (or affecting to espy) someone beckoning him from a distance, bowed hurriedly, and darted into the midst of the crowd, thus leaving me, to my great confusion, solus with the beau. He was frankness itself with me, informing me that if he did not happen to know Mrs. Carlyon but a little, he was sorry to have to add that he knew my friend Mr. John Auldjo still less.

"What, sir!" exclaimed I in my wrath. "Is it possible, then, that you are not even acquainted with my friend Mr. Auldjo?"

"A mere bowing acquaintance, my dear sir, I assure you, 'pon honour!" replied he, at the same time handing me, in token of personal good-will, his amber box, open, on the delicate tips of his plump and pink-nailed fingers.

I could not find it in my heart to refuse the compliment, so honestly did the fellow look me in the eyes. So, taking a modest pinch, and tapping on the box, I restored it to him with a bow.

"You surprise me, sir!" I rejoined. "My friend, in whom I repose the most implicit confidence, has surely made some terrible mistake."

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"Indeed, sir, he is not the man likely to have made any very great mistake in the matter. . . . 'Twas

on the contrary a mighty shrewd hit, considering I have the honour, since the last six weeks, of being Mrs. Carlyon's step-son."

"But, come, young gentleman!" said he, "for such I read you, both in form and feature. I don't blame *you*, one jot. Only suffer me to recommend for your earnest perusal a little book, entitled 'On the Choice of Friends.'"

"I protest, sir!" cried I. "I am wholly unused to parables; as for my dear friend, Mr. Auldjo, I repeat it! He has surely made some mistake."

"Not a bit of it, sir!" replied the exquisite. ". . . He has only presumed too far; and, finding his presumption not unlikely to end in fixing him on the horns of a dilemma, right wisely did he suddenly bethink himself of another fellow in the assembly, and that one, a man more easy to be played upon than your most obedient humble servant."

I defended John through thick and thin with all such skill as I was master of, but, alas! to no earthly purpose. And after being assured, and that most civilly, too, I am bound to admit, that it would not be possible for him to present an entire stranger to Mrs. Carlyon, especially a stranger whose sole motive appeared to lie in the merest curiosity; bowed once more with an amused air, and vanished behind a knot of young folks just immediately beyond us, and engaged in mutual converse.

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Cut to the heart, and mortified beyond all expression, I was taking my way leisurely enough along the ball room floor, when I overtook John. He sprang out at once, recognizing my limping footfall, and turned to meet me, laughing.

"My dearest, nay! my most faithful Achates," cried he, "Pater Æneas has been all this time fruitlessly knocking at the wrong door. That frivolous young coxcomb is insufferably pert and vulgar. Had it not been, Nick, for this grand roof tree of your most distinguished cousin, that shelters us, I had ere this

forced him out to a little sword-play on the green; and with thee, oh! my Fidus Achates, in quality of second, at my back!"

"But, John," said I, "tell me truly now, is it possible that you did not know the gentleman?"

"Know him? Yes! Just about as completely as I know anyone else I have heretofore spoken with."

"True! I have never bandied politics with him at the St. James's over a yard of clay; I have never dined with him at Garraway's; I have never even got drunk with him to my knowledge, to my *actual* knowledge, Jack! But all these small disadvantages a one side, he might, I think, have shown himself more complaisant! And doubtless you think the same?"

"Well," cried I, "and you fled incontinently and left me to fight my own way with him, and *your* battle as well."

"Tush, man!" breaks out John, "you are growing as nasty particular as Master Flaxen-Toupée himself!"

"Not I. But, who is this Mrs. Carlyon? Do you not know *her* neither?"

"Not I!" replies John, with brazen effrontery. "But I wanted to avail myself of our beau (and a mighty pretty fellow he is, I admit), to present the pair of us!"

"As for me!" exclaimed I, by this time scarlet from vexation, "I never sought thus to be conducted to any Mrs. Carlyon of the whole crowd. 'Twas to a certain '*Lady Araminta*,' a reigning toast, and a most particularly intimate friend of your own, John, that I craved an introduction."

"Well! Well! Have it as you will, Master Spitfire! But know, oh! young man, that '*The Lady Araminta*' is but a poetical trope or designation for that utterly charming, though middle-aged beauty, who lately appeared arrayed in Hymen's Saffron Robe at the altar of St. George's, as the bride of that wretched young toad's widowed father."

"And," resumed I, "what had *you* known of her ladyship before that?"

"Nix!" returns John. "Nix, my Fidus! Nix absolutely! Only that she was the fashion, and in everybody's mouth!"

"A word in your private ear, sir," he continued: "You did not avail yourself of the euphuism 'Lady Araminta' to that touzle-headed pomander box in the scarlet heels?"

"Not I, John." It dawned on me all at once that "Araminta" might be in some sort a nick-name to be used only by the privileged. Again, methought it might represent some term of reproach, most indignantly to be resented.

"Besides, you yourself had shifted ground in asking for an introduction to *Mrs. Carlyon*, a name I had never heard mention of previously from you. On the whole I felt it might be unwise not to say, savour of ill-feeling, to breathe the name at all."

"Bravo!" cries John, heartily. "'Twere well we swapped nationalities on the spot! The Scottish prudence and caution Oh! my Achates to thee! To me the brave but mistaken forwardness and confidence of the true Briton!"

"Down in Warwickshire, John," rejoined I, "we used to call the like of that 'impudence.'"

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That night, after I got home, I dreamed a dream.

The Lady Araminta had bade me pick up her fan, which had fallen on the floor of the ballroom, when her step-son in the flaxen toupée, coming upon the scene with a cool and contemptuous gesture, was about to wrest it from me.

On my attempting to elude him, he turned all of a sudden into John Auldjo; John, too, wearing a countenance expressive of the liveliest chagrin.

Which, seeing, I awoke.

CHAPTER XXII.

WHEREIN CAPTAIN WOODS-ROGERS IS MINDED TO MAKE MY FORTUNE.

The world wagged gaily enough with me now, but I continued to feel as much out of my natural element as does a pinioned sea-gull doomed to pick up slugs on some garden-walk, or a swan forced to a day's march on a turnpike road.

I had missed my true vocation, that was clear. But I had the common sense to note that regrets (certainly unavailing in a case like my own) might in time degenerate into something even worse. I therefore determined to put all my trust in Providence, and my shoulder to the wheel. Nor was I entirely without my reward, for Mr. Exon, who had observed the diligence with which of late I had applied myself to his affairs, sent for me one fine morning, and in the course of a neat harangue, proposed to add somewhat to my responsibilities, and my salary at the same time.

"If," said he, "I should find that you continue to merit my confidence, I have a scheme (now under consideration) whereby I purpose opening a business at Bombay . . . but of this another time."

* * * *

Mr. Barnaby, to whom I confided my favourable position and dawning good fortune, received the intelligence with a pleasant gravity and commended me not a little for the resolution I had shown, expressing also a hope that I would not long delay in taking to myself a wife, and giving hostages to fortune.

My short life had presented up to this time one strange succession of thwarts and stoppages, caused by influences, seen and unseen, which swayed me to

this side or to that, though steadfastly and hopefully bound on my original course.

The society of the clubs and coffee-houses drew me (and by no means unwillingly on my part, I confess it) into the thorny paths (they proved so later on) of literature. And again, the world of fashion, on whose skirts I began to find myself hovering, seemed to promise me something more germane to my ideas than the routine of an office, even though it were Mr. Exon's.

It always, or most always, happened that no sooner had I begun in earnest to please my employer (and *therefore*, Mr. Barnaby, whose sworn friend he was) than some mad wag of a John Auldjo or a Harry Redmayne, came in to disturb my mercantile gravity; or else exerting a grander and subtler influence, my highly respected friends, Mr. Daniel Defoe and Captain Woodes-Rogers.

I cared not too often to quote Mr. Defoe to Mr. Barnaby, on whose generally placid features I could easily detect an expression of latent dislike whenever I chanced to mention the name of the great romancer and politician.

For my own part, I seemed to bear a divided allegiance.

Mr. Defoe, by his bright example, beckoned me toward the higher slopes of Parnassus, not to mention that region where flourished politics, and one beheld the fruit that hung just out of reach on the various branches of that thorny tree.

While on the other hand Captain Woodes-Rogers, whose fondness for my society increased day by day, held out hopes of a career more suited to my peculiar disposition, than that which both common gratitude and commoner sense compelled me to adopt.

Now, here I had perhaps better relate the circumstance while it is yet fresh on the tablets of my memory.

Lady Frothingham, on the occasion of my visit of duty after the ball, seized the opportunity of mentioning to me that her friend Captain Woodes-Rogers was greatly minded to make my fortune, and her lady-

ship, who had also herself become singularly pre-possessed in my favour, spoke of a certain friend at Court who had been at some pains to serve her on former occasions.

Soon after this conversation her Ladyship sent Tiptree Willoughby in her yellow coach to call upon me.

He brought with him a very gracious note from her Ladyship, wherein she did me the high honour of styling me "cousin," and referring me to Tiptree for particulars.

"Captain Rogers," said Tiptree, "upon whom fortune begins again to smile, is now by Her Majesty's Royal favour on the high road to preferment and promotion.

"'Tis not entirely in his own particular profession, though in the high functions he will be called upon to assume, he will in some sort enact the part of a Vice-Admiral. In two words, the Bahamas are to have a Governor, and I have it on the highest authority that Captain Woodes-Rogers has been specially selected for the post; this, not only on account of his former long experience in the Spanish Main, but also because of his well-known tact and undoubted administrative ability.

"In fine, a West-India Government could not be in better hands than in those of a tried naval commander of brilliant antecedents.

"Five or six old generals have, as I hear, been sent empty away by Her Majesty; who, while judging that is the particular province of a soldier to rule a fortified city on the mainland, yet considers that it of right pertains to a sailor, who has seen much service afloat, to guard the destinies of island-provinces, set in the midst of perilous seas."

A sentiment, too, in which I (all tyro as I was) most heartily joined.

Thanking Tiptree for his news, and the kind interest that both Lady Frothingham and himself had taken in my affairs, I bowed him out, with a flushed face and a beating heart.

"I shall not speak yet a while to Mr. Barnaby on this matter," said I to myself. "No; nor to Mr. Exon neither. Better far to wait until I hear further from Captain Woodes-Rogers."

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Nor had I long to wait, for the very next post that arrived, brought me a note from that gallant officer himself, desiring me to wait on him at the St. James's Coffee-house by half-past seven of the clock that same evening, as he was wishful of having some private talk with me concerning an important matter.

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In reply to various questions put to me, I stated my parentage, my age last birthday, my exact degree of education and training, and my present circumstances, as they stood; item, a resumé of the experience I had acquired in mercantile affairs at Mr. Exon's, and in literary knowledge under the auspices of his friend, Mr. Defoe.

All this being apparently to the satisfaction of my patron (for as such I must now consider him), he spoke much to the following effect:

"I have sent for you, Mr. Rous, in order that I may make you a certain proposal, which, if you should see your way to accept, it may turn out a stepping-stone to fortune.

"The time is brief, therefore I can only allow you a week to arrive at a decision, and make arrangements or not, as may prove most agreeable to your plans.

"I am going out as Governor to the Bahamas, and as I love to have about my person, not only men of parts and intelligence, but men in whom I feel I can repose a just and honourable confidence, I design to make you one of my secretaries; and if, after you have served some time on my personal staff in the West Indies, you should desire to make a change, I will charge myself with the care and responsibility of getting you appointed to first available vacancy in the Queen's Navy, as an admiral's secretary, thus opening to you

a door, that you had previously considered hopelessly closed against you. You will be non-combatant, of course," he added, smilingly, "but for all that you will wear your sword and the Queen's cloth as a matter of right."

After some further talk, and a glass of Madeira, he shook me cordially by the hand, bidding me decide in whichever direction it might seem wisest to myself, and to call again to inform him so soon as my mind should be definitely made up.

I was literally overwhelmed, and no less by this stroke of good fortune than by the generous conduct and behaviour of Captain Woodes-Rogers himself, which I acknowledged by taking the offered hand and pressing it to my lips as I made my adieu.

* * * *

Mr. Exon and the Bombay factory, and His Excellency Captain Woodes-Rogers and the Government of the Bahamas. A pretty see-saw, take it as I might!

I weighed these, the one against the other in my private mind, and with no small degree of perplexity and pain; but my ancient and confirmed enthusiasm for the Queen's Navy caused the Woodes-Roger's scale to gravitate the more heavily; while Mr. Exon, with all his ships and storehouses and moneys, went nigh to kick the beam!

The more I considered the perplexing subject, the more heavy-hearted did I become. I felt like that fabled personage who is painted between pleasure and prudence, and all uncertain as to which of the two he should surrender himself.

But there entered yet another element into my reflections, and that one distressed me more than I can find words to relate it in.

Sylvia! And what would she think of it all? Would she love me better at Bombay with the dim prospect of a partnership in the honoured firm of Exon and Company, whose ships were on every sea? Or, having renounced a dawning certainty for a brilliant possible

future, would she love me better as the chosen secretary of an Imperial Viceroy in the West Indies?

Sylvia, probably in her rustic ignorance of affairs, might feel minded to beg of me to stay where I was, in Mr. Exon's London office, and let both Bombay and the Bahamas take care of themselves. But then again, on viewing me in exalted imagination on the high road to Royal favour and distinction, a possible Colonial Governor in future, or even, say, but the confidential attaché of an Admiral of the Fleet, and with naval rank equal to that of a major in the army, might she not, smothering all the maidenly alarms likely to arise in her innocent young bosom, move me to join Captain Woodes-Rogers, trusting to Heaven for time and prayed-for circumstances to re-unite us one day under happier auspices and in a more brilliant position?

Come what might, I determined forthwith to unbosom myself to Sylvia in a letter; but first I felt it my bounden duty to lay the story of all that had befallen me during the past few days to good Mr. Barnaby, who had ever proved himself so true a friend and so complete and competent an adviser.

It cost me no small effort, either, for I had a keen presentiment of a moral homily from him, as I knew well already that he regarded posts under Government but coldly and with suspicion; besides that he had small regard either for the glitter or the trappings of the service.

* * * *

After hearing me through thoughtfully, patiently, and in silence, he bade me choose for myself. "But," said he, "while on the one hand you consider the kindness and disinterested friendship of Captain Woodes-Rogers, and the splendour of the position to which, under his protection and auspices, you may yet hope to attain; I would not have you, on the other hand, by any means, to under-rate the debt of gratitude which you owe to Mr. Exon, who has your true interest so much at heart, and who, to my own certain personal knowledge, desires nothing so much as placing you on

the right track to success in life, and a distinction every whit as honourable as any that was ever yet carved out with the sword. . . ." Here my good old friend paused, and regarded me with a keen and steady look that almost bordered on severity, continued in these terms:

"I would also have you most carefully to consider how the decision you are to arrive at may affect the destinies of a certain young lady in Warwickshire, whose interests; nay, whose very existence (am I not right) is bound up in, and ought to be identical with, your own. . . .

"I shall not attempt to influence you in any particular; but, while I make you a present of the proposition that merchants may fail, and their servants suffer in the general ruin, I cannot, as a man of some little experience of the world; not to say as a diligent student of history, avoid telling you that high offices under Government are only too often held, not at the pleasure of the Sovereign, so much as at that of Court favourites and creatures.

"You may retire (it is possible) on your laurels after an arduous and distinguished career; rich, covered with honours and all the insignia of rank and of Royal approval. But, remember, my dear boy, there is a reverse to every medal; and the same Royal hand which is, alas! guided for evil as well as for good by its ministers (who are themselves for ever changing), may deal out to you, though not only innocent, but meritorious; disgrace, dismissal, and even death!

"Remember Sir Walter Raleigh, one of your own favourite maritime heroes, and lay *his* fate well to heart. . . .

"I have no desire, Nicholas, to damp your young ambition, but I have now fairly delivered my soul of its burden, and leave it to yourself to choose whatever you may consider to be the best, the fairest, and the most honourable course; and that Providence may guard you and guide you in making that choice, is the prayer that now rises most naturally to my lips."

As I thanked my kind old friend my voice trembled, and tears stood in my eyes.

I likened myself silently in my own private mind to the young man in the Parable "that went away exceeding sorrowful, *for that he had large possessions.*"

Now, my possible future possession of rank, influence, and a happy enjoyment of life in a *congenial* profession, were as real to me; as they were, in point of fact, dreamy and illusory.

The moral, evidently, of Mr. Barnaby's homily was: "What shall it advantage a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul?"

* * * *

"I shall write to Sylvia, and that at once," was what I said to myself, with a big sigh. "I shall lay before her all that you have been so good as to advance pro and con, and I will be guided entirely by her wishes; but, sooner than prove ungrateful, whether to my benefactor, Mr. Exon, or yourself, sir, I would infinitely prefer to live and die in the honest and reputable position for which I have to thank both him and you."

Mr. Barnaby grasped the hand I put forth, as I rose to seek my couch upstairs, and I guessed from the pressure that he was not dissatisfied with me.

* * * *

Next day, meeting John Auldjo just after I had despatched my missive to Sylvia, he advanced with an arch look on his countenance, and shook me by the hand with a heartiness that completely reassured me for the moment.

I mentioned, under seal of the strictest confidence, the noble offer of Captain Woodes-Rogers, but without (so far) entering upon any details.

"Come, you make me the happiest churl in all Christendom!" cried he. "I, who can never manage to serve myself, am perpetually the humble means of serving others." "Now, between you and me and the

bedpost, dear friend and pitcher; 'tis to your most humble and devoted servant, that you, somehow, owe this (to you) unexpected stroke of good fortune."

"Hey! And how so, John," exclaimed I, vastly bewildered by the assertion.

"That's tellings," replied he, laying his thin forefinger thoughtfully along his nose, and so bending the tip a little a-one-side as he finished, somewhat after the fashion of a controversial theologian contemplating a syllogism, or an astute chess player meditating check-mate.

"Some men" (he went on) "are born great, some have greatness thrust upon them, and so forth; but your Worship takes from *me*, who am, as it were, a tube whence benefits (wherein I have no personal share) descend as from a cornu-copiæ on the heads of those who have the best right to call me, *Friend!* See that old curmudgeon Defoe! *I* have made his fortune thirteen times over already. But where is he now? Muddling away everlastingly over parchments and papers, or stepping fiercely into the Grecian, where he orders two wax candles, forsooth! and a clean pipe, and squats him down like a Carib with a journal before him that he never reads; just for the pleasure of savagely abusing half the town and me, *me*, sir! his benefactor and protector, along with the rest!!

"Out upon it, for an ungrateful and rascally world! May I never do another good-natured action so long as I live, or my name's not Jack Auldjo! 'Twas I that first made known the old driveller to Woodes-Rogers, and he in his turn presented him to that wild man of the woods, Alexander Selkirk. As for Alexander himself, 'twas I in my own modest way that made him the fashion, and now the pious and semi-silent misanthrope looks on me as if 'twas I, and not Woodes-Rogers, that had bereft him of what he terms in his rude Caledonian brogue, his 'Beloved Island!'"

"Avast there, John!" cried I. "Methought, the Auldjos after the Admirable Crichtons owned more than half Scotland!"

"Ah!" replied he, with a shrug of the shoulders and a gesture of discomfort that diverted me hugely, "there are Scotsmen *and* Scotsmen."

"Dost think I would liken a man of my quality to the sailing-master (and the mutinous sailing-master, too!) of a South-Sea-man such as the 'Cinque-Ports Galley'?"

"If I mistake not, Master Defoe is even now working up all my information and remarks into a bulky romance, the which he intends one day to father himself.

"Well did the Mantuan Muse exclaim in agony at the world's ingratitude, 'Sic vos non vobis,' etc."

Turning suddenly from Virgil and Mantua to Thames-street and Mr. Exon, he whispered me in the ear, that 'twas owing entirely to his disinterested advice that Mr. Exon had caused the "Forte" to be detained a week at the Nore, thereby saving her from the capture that overtook another ship sailing on the originally appointed day. "I could tell you more and much more, an I would, my Fidus Achates! quæ longum præscribere est, etc.

"But enough of all this, my Fidus! I forgive Woodes-Rogers from the bottom of my heart for your sake. My gall is all expended; I have no more now in my constitution than has the dove.

"Let's to the Grecian and drink success to his new Excellency of the Bahamas, who, little as he dreams of it, owes his advancement in life to a word put in at a venture by yours truly.

"We will drink him a prosperous career and a rare time amongst the pirates of the West India Keys; but, above all, we must drink to his brand-new secretary, so lately Fidus Achates to my Pius Æneas."

John would take no denial, and I accompanied him up the tall steps of the pavilion of the Grecian, on the strict understanding either that we had a private room, or that he performed his toasting mentally and in silence.

"As you will; as you will, my Fidus!" cried he, flinging himself up the stairs two steps at a time and dragging me after him. "But 'tis clear to me that you will want all the rum and lemons and sugar of the Bahamas to wash this old-Barnaby-fog out of your brains."

As we entered the coffee-house, John indicated with

a toss of the head an old gentleman whose fortune he had made at least ten times over, but who still continued, from his own crass stupidity and dogged obstinacy, as poor a man as ever.

This gentleman, whose air betokened that he had known better days, was sitting "solus" at a little side table with a bottle and glass before him and a copy of that day's "Spectator" on his knee.

Recognising an old acquaintance in a passer-by, he begged him to honour him so far as to take a seat at his table and enjoy a glass of excellent wine. "You see," added he, "'tis 'pension-day.' Here is a whole bottle, and if you will condescend to join me 'twill afford me the sincerest pleasure."

The person addressed, so far from bowing his acknowledgments, burst, to my horror, on the hospitable old man with "No! sir, not I! You ought to know me well enough by this time to be aware that Jack Dowsett scorns to drink little children's boots and shoes!"

John Auldjo meanwhile, on pleasure bent, swept along towards the further end of the room, beckoning me to follow, the which I did, but quite mechanically, and, truth to tell, sorrowfully enough, for I could not choose but look back to watch the countenance of the poor pensioner, which presented a perfect study of dumb amazement.

The other man, who had styled himself Dowsett, continued to vociferate, and that loud enough for all the drawers and Phyllises in the coffee-house to hear him—

"That old scoundrel," roared he, "is a married man, and here on pension-day he drinks his pint of old port and reads his 'Spectator' as though there were not a starving wife and family at home!"

The fellow was boiling-over with seemingly virtuous indignation, and a stranger regarding this incomparable actor might have been well pardoned for imagining the indignation just and well-founded; but I myself, who was by this time somewhat of a physiognomist, read nought in the features of the old man beyond an honest poverty and patient distress enjoy-

ing one of the few blinks of sunshine that irradiated an otherwise shabby existence.

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We drank (John and I) in a little box behind one of the oaken screens (which made our sitting sufficiently private), and, after that he had complimented me again and wondered at his own rare luck in getting for me the secretaryship, we smoked a pipe of Right Oronooko over it, when, after having satisfied the drawer, we took our way down the street.

CHAPTER XXIII.

THE OLD LIEUTENANT.

But before I leave this ground altogether I feel sorely tempted (though it has nothing to do with my own personal story) to add yet another chapter in conclusion of the adventures at the Grecian.

It is with the old pensioner that I have now to do.

I encountered him by the rarest chance, and only a few days after brisk John Auldjo had insisted on drinking success to myself and the new secretaryship.

"I am sorry, sir!" said he, after the usual compliments had passed between us, "that you should have chanced to witness and probably misunderstand a scene that took place at the Grecian between myself and a man whom prosperity has spoiled, and whose pride is even now pushing him towards the brink of the precipice which must one day prove his destruction.

"When quite a youth this Mr. Dowsett (for such is his designation) would come and stay with us (it was we that were prosperous *then*) by the week together.

"I kept the boy in pocket-money, he had the run of my small library and papers, and knew even where to discover my pipes, and the exact cupboard where I would bestow my best Oronooko.

"In short, he did precisely what pleased him best in our cottage at Deptford. We looked on him with affection as if he had been one of our family, treating him to the play betimes, the shows, the processions and the like—taking him, in short, everywhere we went; insomuch that my own boys (poor little chaps!), who saw further into Master Jack Dowsett's politics than I did, grew downright jealous of the youngster, and mutinous, egad! into the bargain!

"I had left the service, pretty well-nigh worn out and crippled besides; but still I had the old house that

had been ours for more than three generations; so it cost me nought for rent. But one unlucky miserable day all by little savings were swamped in an ill-starred speculation. My dear old cottage had to follow, and it went gallows-hard with me, I can tell you, young gentleman! to save my poor and paltry pension from being attacked likewise.

"From that day to this Master Dowsett and I have been but the merest of acquaintances. Times have changed, and with them we ourselves, as some scholar aptly saith, have changed also. See the complete round of the wheel of fortune, sir! Dowsett is now, forsooth (as he puts it), *my* patron!

"Ask him whence this wretched pension for long service and honourable wounds, and he will tell you that 'twas Jack Dowsett who wrung it from the Admiralty, while I myself am the ungratefulest old dog alive; that I refuse to own the fact! Besides, would you believe him, he has assisted me times without number, what with advice and what in the matter of ready cash.

"I mention this as you might, sir, have chanced to hear somewhat of this brag already during your visits to the Grecian. A lie, sir! a brazen lie! like the other.

"Like me it was, like the old ass that I am, to have asked him to share my pension-day bottle; but, seeing him so sleek and pleasant and comely withal, my heart also being warmed by the first glass of wine I had tasted for an entire month, I agreed to sink the new Mr. John Dowsett in the pleasant memory of the younger John.

"How terribly I had miscalculated and how bitterly I was deceived you may judge for yourself.

"How publicly and how scandalously I was insulted you both saw and heard.

"'Drink children's boots and shoes,' sir! 'A starving wife at home!' Gods! had I but two legs and a pair of leathern lungs like his, I'd expose him not only in this public place, but I'd flog the rascal naked through the world (as the fellow says in the play).

"I have no children, young, sir, to wear little boots

and shoes; nor have I known the music of a childish footfall on my poor floor these a-many years.

"Roger, my favourite boy and my biggest (a nobler seaman never trod a plank), died of the coast fever at Savanna-la-Mar when only a lad of twenty.

"James, now eighteen, is apprenticed to a trade, since necessity compels; and my poor Cœlia, alas! with her last-born on her bosom (mother and child in the one coffin) lies buried at Deptford, without so much, to my shame and grief, as a stone to mark the spot where she is laid."

Here the old Lieutenant became so affected that I implored him to defer the remainder of the relation of his troubles to another time; but, presently recovering himself (though somewhat spent) he resumed, as follows:—

"Now, sir! for the other side of the story. I am a simple old man, and not credited with much power of observation; but, simple and unobserving as I may seem, I have come to learn *that* about Master Jack Dowsett which might tempt him to pay right royally for my silence.

"Know the exact truth now, for I don't fear to relate it.

"Those 'little boots and shoes' I would were on certain little feet and legs that I wot of, to which I desire nothing but good, as I do to whatever may belong to all infants and babes whatsoever.

"As for the starving wife now (there the boot is on the other leg)! In the quality of wife she has no existence—you may search the parish registers in vain for the marriage; but, for all that, there is a young woman of family, education, and the remains of a rare beauty who, with a sore heart and wearied fingers, gains a scant livelihood for herself and certain little ones as well by her needle, though where little mouths have to be filled and little backs to be covered little feet must, alas! but too often go bare.

"She has not the right to style herself Mistress Dowsett (Jack took fine care of that)! And, young sir! I have it from one who only knows but too well the scoundrel flogs her!"

CHAPTER XXIV.

IN WHICH I DECIDE FOR MR. EXON.

I listened to the old Lieutenant with all the respect due to grey hairs and sorely unmerited distress, and as he advanced his simple story, his low voice sinking still lower where he described his lost boy dead at Savanna-la-Mar, the tear trembling on his sun-browned cheek as he spoke of his beloved Cœlia and her infant (mother and child in one coffin) in Deptford churchyard, and to see his grey eyes kindle into flame where he ended with "and the scoundrel flogs her!" touched me to the heart.

I was carried clean out of myself and my narrow everyday world, and felt as Hamlet must have felt when he exclaims, "I'd take the ghost's word for a thousand pound!"

And my poor shattered remains of a British tar (what think you of this?) was himself a ghost on that day week! for I read of his demise in "Dyer's Letter" on the following Tuesday.

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I waited (as may be imagined) most anxiously for Sylvia's letter, and 'tis but the commonest justice to say that she lost no time in making her reply, the very despatch that she used proving to me how dearly my little maid loved her wayward and far-away swain, and how intently she hung on all the issues of his destiny.

'Twas a most beautiful letter—simple, artless and touching—none too short, and smelled (so it seemed to my fancy) of new-made hay and violets; full of anxiety, too, but less for herself than for me; covertly hinting, nevertheless, that London lay nearer Warwick than either Bombay or the Bahamas, "and London

itself" ('twas thus she concluded) "is by far too distant from your loving heart, Sylvia."

But what was to be done? Captain Woodes-Rogers could only afford me one day further to decide.

Mr. Exon still continued to talk about the Bombay factory and his Indian affairs.

Mr. Barnaby counselled me to say my prayers over it, and thereafter do whatever seemed in my eyes most right.

I had half a mind as I climbed upstairs to my chamber that night to turn down a leaf in my dear mother's Bible, as I had seen old Marjory do at home with her's; but I speedily rejected the idea as savouring of superstition and every way unworthy a young fellow who had seen the world, and now the chosen secretary of a colonial Governor.

Had I not followed Mr. Barnaby's pious precept and gone down on my knees first, I had made a bad night of it; but as it was I slept tranquilly and rose refreshed.

Early next morning I knocked at the door of Mr. Barnaby's apartment, and, getting word to come in, drew aside his bed-curtains gently, exclaiming as I did so, "Well, sir! my mind is made up. My good friend Captain Woodes-Rogers will have to provide himself with another secretary. As for myself, I will never desert Mr. Exon; but I don't want to go out to Bombay—at all events just at present."

"Pish! Psha!" cries Mr. Barnaby, with night-cap over his nose, and drawing up his knees in the bed. "Sylvia, I see! Apron-string, and so forth; but thou'rt a brave lad, bless thee! and thou shalt to Bombay, and that soon; and make thy fortune, too. Go out, sir! Work hard and return rich in gold, mohurs and rupees, and richer than all the wealth of Ormuz and of Ind can make thee, in respect of thy beauteous Sylvia, who is only (bless her honest little soul) a trifle timid at the present juncture."

"'Tis not timidity, sir!" cried I, resenting the imputation on the instant.

"No! neither it is, John!" replied Mr. Barnaby, at the same time looking me full in the face. "'Tis love, sir! and see that she love thee not beyond thy deserts."



HIS EXCELLENCY CAPTAIN WOODS-ROGERS'S FAREWELL
TO JOHN ROSS.

CHAPTER XXV.

WHEREIN I SIGN MY ABDICATION.

Mr. Barnaby, who had called on Mr. Exon and informed him pretty fully of my recent strong temptation and how I had come out of it, obtained me a whole holiday the more conveniently to wait upon Captain Woodes-Rogers with my final decision.

It appeared that, although his Excellency had given me time to consider, my declining the splendid offer he had made me was the very last thing in his imagination.

I found him alone. On his table were despatch boxes and books and papers. A yellow wax taper, just whiffed out, stood on the edge of the standish before him, and a strong though by no means unpleasant smell of sealing-wax pervaded the air of the apartment.

On a couch against the wall I came to notice some grand new clothes heavily laced with gold, also a superb sword of a pattern with which I was as yet unfamiliar, laid on top of them.

"Ah! good-morrow to you, Mr. Rous," he began kindly. "Pray be seated. I am glad to find you so punctual at the start. Where time runs so short as it does with *us*, every moment is of consequence.

"Your private arrangements, I trust, are made, and to expedite matters I have sent down to Bond-street to my own tailor, whose man is already waiting your convenience in the next apartment to measure you for the uniforms in which it is fit and proper you should appear on my staff.

"After that you have despatched your business with him I shall desire your attendance here to write under my own eye two or three letters which I have already sketched out for you in minute form."

"But, but, but," replied I, flushing up (and stammering, too, I fear) as I spoke, "I—I——"

"What! 'Buts' already! But me no butts, if you please, Mr. Rous." And he eyed me with an air so magisterial that I began intuitively to perceive in my kind patron and whilom entertainer and friend the Governor and Vice-Admiral of all the Bahamas.

"May it please your Excellency," I resumed, in such firm but perfectly respectful key as I judged best befitted the situation, "I am, believe me, grieved to the very soul at not being able to accept the honourable office that you, sir, have so generously designed for me."

Here I paused for words which refused to follow, and Captain Woodes-Rogers, pushing back his chair from the table and evidently putting some little strain upon his temper, waited for me to proceed, which I shortly did, enumerating all the obligations I lay under to the Messieurs Barnaby and Exon, and speaking of my desire not to show an ungrateful heart, concluding with a thousand regrets at being forced to renounce all idea of a service which was dear to me, and upon which my mind had been firmly set; but, above all, at not being privileged to serve under so valiant and distinguished and kind a master as I must have found in him.

"Zounds!" cries the Captain. "'Twas a secretary I had need of, and not a chaplain; the fellow preaches like a Sacheverell!"

But, smothering his temper and thereby smoothing out the knotty wrinkle that gathered in the great white scar on his forehead, he assumed a softer tone, and bade me draw nearer.

Obedying him, I walked round to his side of the table, when he, taking me playfully by the left ear, and giving me a smart fillip, cried:

"You sad young dog! You don't deceive a long-service-man thus! There's a petticoat, Jack, at the bottom of this business, or my name's not Woodes-Rogers!"

I replied not a word, but by this time my face, all aflame, told its own story.

"Jack! Jack!" exclaimed he, smiling, and sinking the Governor in the sailor, "'tis but natural, and, being natural, therefore absolutely foolish. Take thine own way though, boy! if needs must. But tell me this, *Would I be choosing a secretary to-day had I taken a 'round-turn' about my arm with poor Poll's apron-string the first day King Charles commanded my services?* Now that we understand each other, remember, you ought to be in a position to find a substitute."

"Your Excellency does me infinite honour," replied I; "but what says your Excellency to my cousin, Lieutenant Tiptree Willoughby, of Her Majesty's Navy?"

"H'm!" cries the Captain; "had my heart not been set on thee, Jack, Tiptree had been my own choice. I shall take action on the hint forthwith."

CHAPTER XXVI.

MR. DANIEL DEFOE'S METHOD, ETC.

While Mr. Exon further considered his Indian affairs I continued assiduously to discharge my duties in the counting-house, and, indeed, found in work the chiefest medicine for my distemper, serving as it did to prevent my dwelling too sorrowfully on that fair but vanished dream of the secretaryship. Nevertheless, Mr. Exon on passing my desk would still shrug his broad shoulders and smile oddly at seeing my scribble-paper covered (as of old) with queer little designs and queerer legends, such as "Captain Woodes-Rogers in the 'Duke' yard-arm and yard-arm with the Spanish galleon 'Dona Carmen de los Angeles';" "Don Alvaro Mendez del Bastimento (the bold pirate of the Bermudas) hanging at the fore-yard arm of the 'Duke';" "The blowing-up of H.M.S. 'Devonshire,'" a prodigious amount of smoke withal; "Mr. Secretary Willoughby, R.N.;" "Fancy sketch of the worthy Mr. Alexander Selkirk teaching his cats to dance;" "An Admiral that might have been" (introducing a phiz that might have favoured my own); "John Auldjo in the garb of Old Gaul at the feet of the Fair Araminta;" "Portrait sketch of the beautiful Mrs. Bracegirdle;" together with sundry pretty little profiles labelled "Sylvia," these latter wreathed about with forget-me-nots, hearts and flames and darts, besides sundry other amatory emblems.

Mr. Exon, though he smiled, said nought, holding me (as he did) incorrigible in these matters, which he doubtless considered entirely beneath the sober dignity of a large business such as his.

'Twas clear to me, therefore, that I had come in some sort to be regarded as a privileged person, for the young man sitting at the next desk to my own did not escape a sound rating in that he had portrayed



MR. DANIEL DEFOE'S METHOD.

a man dangling from a gibbet on the margin of a bill of lading, and opposite to the words "the Queen's enemies," etc.

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Outside the regular round of office life I devoted the better part of my leisure to literary composition and the earnest acquirement of a style whereby I hoped one day to achieve success, if not attain to excellence.

It will therefore not be accounted small matter for surprise that I should have visited Mr. Defoe at every convenient opportunity, and (here place it on record I must) whatever his reputed demeanour towards others, I myself ever found in him the kindest, most good-humoured, and truly the most painstaking of preceptors.

There was that too in Mr. Defoe which, while setting one completely at his ease, never suffered any undue approach towards the verge of familiarity. He did not repel; on the contrary he attracted one; but he possessed the most rare and consummate art of enacting the sovereign master and controller with such gentle firmness and tact that the subject never came either to feel or lament the loss of his personal liberty.

As an instance of our exercises he would set me a theme for a short story, the characters whereof were a present from himself, item the scene, and so the period. Thus furnished and equipped I had to draw upon my own young and undisciplined imagination for the remainder, and, after the lapse of half an hour or so (for he allowed but short grace), I would hand in the tale to be brought under his skilled and critical eye. The story (at first generally a very bald affair) was written with the lines widely apart and leaving a fair broad margin to the left, these spaces being set apart as sacred to the remarks and corrigenda of the master.

In one of these my earlier efforts I had attempted to describe "A Cruise to the Nore in a Lugger."

In this I began by speaking generally of "a fair wind that answered our ends admirably well." By using

this expedient I had flattered myself to get easily over the ground (or rather water), disarming criticism as I went along, and thereby taking the reader by surprise.

On the margin of my text I found written, "This is *slip-slop*. We must have attention to facts. See map with the Thames properly laid down thereon. Then see whether a S.W. wind would much avail in getting down Limehouse Reach towards Greenwich. Perhaps better if put thus, viz.: 'The wind, which had served us very well so far as the pool, now freshening, began to draw ahead, and, finding it useless trying to beat up against the same, we out with our sweeps,' etc. Then from Greenwich to Blackwall is all plain sailing; that's understood. Re invention of detail—to be put in naturally and sans strain, also with a keen eye towards the probable, e.g., 'When off Deptford and full in sight of Greenwich, one of our men, Thomas Atkins, accidentally slipping on the row-bench, sprained his right thumb in attempting to recover himself, whereupon,' etc.

"N.B.—This is not sublime, but, being both probable and homely, confers an air of likelihood and truth upon a narrative in itself purely fictional.—D.D."

I quote this as an example, but I would that thou, my dear descendant (whœver thou art that readest) had'st only been there to see myself with my broad sheet before me, Mr. Defoe, with his glasses run down to the very tip of his nose, regarding the map of the Thames, and laying his parallel ruler across the east and west points of the great mariner's compass figured on the chart, bringing it gradually downward (from the place where the Tower of London is marked) with a bending of its brazen knees till the lower edge of the ebony touched and rested upon Greenwich reach.

It was thus, and by frequent practical illustration of this sort, that Mr. Defoe taught me how to construct; how to invent detail; how to make my detail not only probable but necessary; and, finally (though I never achieved the beauty yet), to throw such an atmosphere of naturalness over the complete narration that it assumed so exact an appearance of truth that no one addressing himself to read it could deem it fiction!

So I flattered myself I learned somewhat of my great master's mode and style as well; but, circumstances snapping the thread of our intercourse, I lost all those latter lessons which, if received, had gone far towards bestowing grace, ease, elegance and finish on the very simplest and humblest of my narratives.

All this time, but quite unknown to myself, a small conspiracy was hatching, and I have since smoked Mr. Barnaby for the principal actor therein.

The affair was got up with so steadfast an attention to naturalness in detail and so bright an outlook towards a desired and desirable conclusion as showed Mr. Barnaby himself to be a fair though unconscious imitator of Mr. Defoe's best principles.

One morning at breakfast he put into my hand a note from my father to himself, including a message for me.

The post-scriptum ran thus: "Having in view the early departure of my son for Bombay, I purpose leaving Warwick by the coach, the Royal Anne, to-morrow morning. . . . Sylvia Herrick, together with her Aunt Wynyard and her maid, will be of my company. If you can discover a suitable lodging for the ladies somewhere in your immediate neighbourhood you will confer an inestimable favour upon and much oblige your most obedient, humble servant, John Rous."

Mr. Barnaby, who had (I felt) been watching my countenance as I read, waited until I had laid the letter down.

That I should have blushed somewhat was but naturally to be expected in my situation; but I was sorely puzzled as to this sudden strategy on the part of my father, whom I had not seen for the space of a few years.

"Has not Mr. Exon mentioned it?" cries Mr. Barnaby; "or are you so immensely exalted after this recent news that you forget the sailing of the 'Forte' for Bombay, which is fixed for ten days hence?"

"I protest, sir," replied I (reddening still further from some small accession of annoyance), "Mr. Exon has not so much as hinted at the matter for weeks, and last time that he did so he seemed completely

uncertain as to what to do in the way of carrying out his intentions."

"'Twas ill done," exclaims Mr. Barnaby, smiling, "and foolishly done, too, I fear—this bringing of Miss Sylvia hither by your worthy parent. Now *you* (only the other day hot for the sea) cannot abide the bare thought of packing your chest and settling your few affairs!

"We shall be having the 'Forte' detained, sir! and a pretty penny to pay for demurrage into the bargain. And now you know, or should know ere this, quite enough of the mercantile marine law to be aware that whoso causeth demurrage, the same shall himself defray the cost thereof."

"There shall be no demurrage, sir! for the 'Forte,'" replied I, "and not on my part in any case.

"'Tis a very sudden affair, for all that; and I myself do not feel at present nearly so ready as I would I did ——."

"Ah!" rejoins Mr. Barnaby, with a comical air that strove hard to appear serious. "I forgot you had yet to bid a long farewell to all your cronies, your clubs, and your coffee-houses, your Harry Redmaynes and your John Auldjos. But what the Right Honourable Joseph Addison and Captain Sir Richard Steele, not to mention the astute Mr. Daniel Defoe, are to do when you are gone I cannot conceive, and, as you will doubtless all take leave of each other in Latin hexameters, the sooner you set about your 'vales' and 'valetes' the better!"

With this and the like style of banter Mr. Barnaby ran on; but, cooling down, I suffered him so to run on till, like an ullage-cask, he was completely run out, and when I conceived him fairly subsided at last, I attacked him in earnest about going (as most fitting we should) to meet my father and Sylvia and Aunt Wynyard at Temple Bar.

I shall never forget that Saturday evening as I stood at the inn door watching the coach that held my destinies bowling along towards me and gradually coming nearer and nearer. The box-seat was full and the roof well-packed, too, what with trunks and

baskets and parcels and other "impedimenta;" but I could not discern till it came close up to the horse-block the elderly gentleman in the russet-grey wig, with ruddy complexion and keen blue eyes, who was looking out of the window nearest to me. I myself was but one of a small crowd gathered there, and, in my new laced coat, which I had donned in honour of Sylvia, and my new long stockings on legs so much longer than they used to be when I was at Warwick, 'twas but small cause for wonder if my father looked twice to assure himself that 'twas really I. Miss Wynyard next showed her well-known features at the window; but she, being of a fixed and firmly settled age that changeth not for years, her I knew at a glance. The coach was really very full, and as I looked up earnestly and hopefully towards the window, and still seeing no Sylvia, I imagine my countenance must have assumed an air of blank disappointment, as I observed my father and Miss Wynyard exchanging glances and enacting some little pantomime of mutual intelligence between them. My father, knitting his brows and drawing down the corners of his mouth, affected to look grave; but, Miss Wynyard, over-acting her part (I had not seen neither Mrs. Oldfield nor Mrs. Bracegirdle for naught), I speedily conceived that Sylvia sat concealed behind one or other of them.

And when the ostler's ladder was brought round, and they began to descend one by one, I fought for place, and soon had the unspeakable happiness to receive Sylvia into my own arms.

CHAPTER XXVII.

A SERMON AT ST. DUNSTAN'S IN THE WEST.

My dreams that night were full of fantastic allegory, a wedding ring figuring therein; Mr. Barnaby the bridegroom, and I myself (though sorely against the grain) giving the bride (that is to say, Sylvia) away! Also admonishing my own father, in a notable and somewhat magisterial oration, to avoid drinking and wild society, and to strengthen his master's authority in all things, whether afloat or ashore, whether in India or in England; and Mr. Masterman crying out with all his might, "Hear! hear!"

I awoke early, for the staple of dreams is a light slumber with frequent breaks therein, caused mayhap in some degree by the highness or the lowness of the pillow, or the excitement there may have chanced to the brain during the day, or both.

When I leapt out of bed 'twas yet dark, the watch-cried "five! and a clear, starlight mornin';" but seeing it was Sunday, and, indeed, no breakfast until after eight, I was fain to creep under the blanket again, where I lay meditating on the future with all its possibilities for good and evil, for satisfaction or for disappointment, until the first bell.

After breakfast (as appointed by my father) I waited on him to go to church with himself and Miss Wynyard and Sylvia, providing the ladies felt equal to the same after the fatigues of the past two days.

When I arrived at his lodging (which was in the next street to our own) I found him in his chair by the fireside, the breakfast equipage being still upon the table.

He had a thousand questions to ask me, beginning with my accident, and noticing my lameness with a degree of concern that gave my soul more trouble than

if he had blinked it altogether. To those who suffer under no deformity, whether hereditary or acquired, this may seem ungrateful; but to such as themselves labour under a like infirmity my sensitiveness on this head will neither appear misplaced nor unnatural.

For the first time I began to dread the thought of limping along the pavement on the way to church in company with Sylvia, but such unworthy fear was speedily put to flight as my goddess herself appeared upon the scene. My father had left the apartment for a moment in search of something in his own bedroom, and Miss Wynward was engaged with her maid.

I stood there, solus, in the breakfast parlour regarding myself in my new plum-coloured suit in the mirror over the mantel-shelf, when Sylvia, rosy like the morn, and radiant in the first flush of her maidenly beauty, came bounding in with all the grace and agility of a young fawn.

'Twas the story of my illustrious grandsire re-enacted, but "with a difference"—and I crimsoned at the thought of *my* lameness having been caused by a lumbering brewer's wain, whereas my grandfather's timber-toe was brought to pass by a too close acquaintance with the enemy's round-shot.

In less time than it takes me to record the fact, my neck was encircled by the fairest and loveliest pair of arms in all Christendom; and Sylvia, whose mind and my own, by some singular and unaccountable sympathy, were dwelling on the self-same incident at the same moment, reminded me, as she half-clung to me and half-supported me, of what Dame Dorothy had said to Captain Willoughby touching his "timber-toe," and how she gloried in it.

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"It convinces me," cried I, "not only that our hearts are one, but our minds also; for I was thinking of the self-same scene and story, as I first caught sight of your adorable figure in the mirror. But grandfather was a hero, and full of the poetry of honourable wounds. I myself—but the object of a miserable acci-

dent, which has debarred me from the pursuit of glory in the paths of duty and of honour."

"But," rejoined she, in a mighty pretty speech, and so flattering withal to my feelings that I must forbear relating it at length, "you are none the less a hero for all that, Nicholas!*

"See what you have endured with fortitude; what sacrificed without a murmur; and on how great an enterprise of adventure are you now bound to the ends of the world!"

"Tilley-valley!" exclaimed I, brightening up with suddenness; "I have but done my duty in accordance with the dictates of conscience, and supported (under God's providence) by——"

"Well, sir! and what? Shall I fill in the blank for you?"

"With all my heart!" cried I.

"Well! By the good advice and kindly aid of Mr. Barnaby!"

"I were worse than ungrateful to deny it," said I; "but all Mr. Barnaby's preachings, I fear me had gone for nought in this wild round of London life, had it not been for the love of the best, the brightest, and the most beautiful woman in the whole world!"

"I begin to perceive, sir!" said she, archly, "that we may have poetry other than that inspired by honourable wounds."

"The first of the Muses," replied I, "was——"

"Was—who? Isn't it in Telemaque, sir?"

"Marry, no! (What should the Archbishop of Cambray know about it?) . . . was . . . Sylvia!!!"

How much more of this pretty nonsense we had talked I cannot for the life of me imagine, but at this precise moment Miss Wynyard entered the apartment.

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Sylvia, filled with a pretty confusion, which rendered her in my eyes more lovely than ever, questioned me as to the church that I regularly attended, and Miss Wynyard, who declared that she was far too much

*Sylvia at this time was wont to call me indifferently by either of my names, Nicholas or John.

shaken by the coach journey to think of going out that morning, proposed that Sylvia, my father and myself should go to St. Dunstan's in the West, while she read a homily at home and saw to the dinner.

Hereupon Sylvia made pretence that she could not so much as dream of leaving her Aunt Amelia alone, and that in a strange house, too! But the old lady was firm in her resolve, and, my father having by this time got into his fine clothes, presented himself with his hat under his arm, and ordered me, "as one that knew the town," to lead the way. Whereupon we set out.

In our passage down the Strand into Fleet-street Sylvia was not so much astonished for a country-bred maiden as might have been expected, but in truth the thoroughfare in these parts does not fill to overflowing of a Sunday morning.

I began to fear likewise that she, who was so well used to her own beautiful St. Mary's and St. Nicholas's at Warwick, would find but scant pasture for the eye in the grey and quaint old Church of St. Dunstan's in the West; but, just as we sighted it the long minute-hand drawing up to the big "twelve" on the top of the clock-face, the two gigantic figures in bronze that stood there like two salvage men supporting a nobleman's escutcheon, raised their arms on high and, with the brazen hammers in their grasp, belaboured the bell by turns, and with right good will, too, until, stroke by stroke, they gave us the hour of the day.

At this strange spectacle Sylvia fairly exclaimed, and I (hitting on a text by singular good luck) quoted, "And there were giants in those days."

Hereat my father (who had first become acquainted with those self-same giants when a mere youth) could not forbear a smile.

Within I saw many faces that I knew, and the sexton perceiving in myself a regular church-goer, and with two strangers of my company as well, beckoned me over, at the same time whispering me in the ear of a vacant family pew that we would find much to our liking. Into which and without further to do we were speedily shown, and found it exceedingly comfortable, being a huge boxed-in affair, whence we could see the

clergyman without ourselves being seen by the congregation. The walls were upholstered with scarlet cloth and brass-headed nails; in the midst stood a small square table with books thereon, and having seats on three of its sides, while several little kneeling-hassocks lay on the floor.

I confess it unreservedly, my thoughts wandered in the strangest possible manner, as also did my eyes from London all the way to Warwick in one flight of imagination; thence again on the wings of fancy to a Bombay that I had never as yet visited; and reading the first lines of the Lord's Prayer and the Creed, also portions of the Ten Commandments on the two round-headed tablets on the wall, I seemed to confuse them with sundry mural epitaphs and an inscription relating to "the cleansing and beautifying of this church at the proper expense and charges of Thomas Robinson, Esquire, Alderman of the City of London." This latter inscription, I recollect, provoked a smile from Sylvia, who whispered me to enquire, "How long since?" but a look from my father (who took less account of the march of time than did either Sylvia or myself, and evidently still regarding us in the light of children) speedily caused us to compose our countenances and betake ourselves once more to our Psalters.

'Twas my first Sunday at church with Sylvia, and also the last I was to see in my native land for many a long day to come, and that is how this little circumstance happens to find itself so clearly engraven on the tablets of my memory. The parson, a great fat man in a grizzled wig, with a rosy countenance and dimpled chin, took for his text, singularly enough, the 23rd verse of the 107th Psalm, "They that go down to the sea in ships, and do business in the great waters," etc.

He began by expatiating on the feebleness and insignificance of man, who alone of all God's creatures came naked into the world. This being, within whose defenceless frame might breathe the soul of a Cæsar or an Alexander, required to be tended as an exotic, even in his native clime, until able to run and shift for himself, and then had to be fed and clad and shel-

tered; unlike the beasts that perish, which have their own resources and resorts in every season, man must be protected and wrapped up and fenced-about from the cold of winter, screened from the fiercer rays of the summer sun, and guarded from the bleak, chill, and biting winds that come before the spring.

"Man" (continued the reverend doctor), "also unlike the beasts of the field, the fowls of the air, and the fishes of the sea, is a creature of many and various wants and acquired habits, and the longer he exists the more he needs, and the more he sighs for.

"To him the sheep resigns its fleece, to him the tree its fruits, to him the beast its hide, to him the garden all its wholesome increase; but, far from being content with all that is simple, health-giving, and homely, he seeks out many inventions, he travels in foreign parts, and desires the same things at home that so pleased him when abroad.

"This desire of novelty, based on a feeble and helpless origin, became under that Divine Providence (which mysteriously wrests the strangest and most contradictory affairs to our good) led to the foundation of our commerce.

"Commerce proved the extension of our Empire—our flag floated over every sea—in every clime the Anglo-Saxon tongue was heard—and, in order to the protection of our far-away colonist-brothers, their lands, their factories and their shipping, there sprang into being that most powerful, formidable and glorious engine of European politics, the British Royal Navy!

"A force with which no other navy or assemblage of navies could cope, and ever ready and able to dictate terms of peace to any of the civilized nations of the globe; but" (the Doctor resumed), "grand as is the fighting navy of the nation, we should never permit ourselves to forget what is due to the peaceful navies of commerce, the carriers of corn, wine and oil from the great marts of Europe, and of spices, silks, cotton, sugar and coffee from the regions of the Torrid Zone. To compass many whilom luxuries (now regarded as necessaries even by the lowliest) men must adventure their lives.

"These brave men, parting from father and mother, sisters, brothers and lovers, must out to face the

storm and do battle with the hurricane—fighting against the fury of the elements, sea, storm and fire; imperilling their own and the happiness of all most dear to them, and setting their own existence at stake against the safety of so much really unnecessary merchandise.

“But it is not the merchandise” (he pursued) “that is so much to be considered, nor the gold, nor the profit that is to be put in the imaginary scale and weighed against all these heroic lives, but duty and the true sense of national honour. How much we, as individuals, no less than as a nation, are beholden to these brave men that go down to the sea in ships and do business in the great waters can never be over-estimated; and, while we admire with overflowing hearts and souls the valorous and doughty deeds of our fighting men afloat, we are but poor and cold-blooded creatures if we refuse equal recognition and gratitude to the seamen of that great commercial marine whence hath ever sprung the muscle, bone and sinew of our warlike navy, the guardian of our shores and seas, the maintainer of our national honour, and the pioneer of Christianity and civilization in the uttermost parts of the world.”

Here, entering into a statement of the toils and privations of the mariner's life, associated ever with the presence of danger and the uncertainty of return, he compared the cheerfulness and alacrity of these miserably paid fellow-subjects most favourably with the disposition of those more privileged ones who stayed at home at their ease, and, mounting to a height of eloquence superior to anything he had as yet manifested in his discourse, made a magnificent peroration commending most warmly and specially the cause of the sailors' widows and orphans to the benevolence of all persons present. By this time I perceived a big tear coursing down Sylvia's cheek, and her hand, which had some minutes previously stolen into mine, clasped me tightly by the wrist.

My father, who meantime manœuvred a huge bandanna, blew his “nose-trumpet” with much emphasis, thereby discovering an emotion which up to now he

had been at some pains to conceal, and began to feel in his pocket.

As we passed out after the doxology, surrounded by the crowd (for 'twas a full church), I saw him drop a half-sovereign into the box at the door, which I myself, being likewise transported with the theme and the occasion thereof, followed up with a bright new crown-piece for Sylvia and myself.

I listened to that noble discourse (which I have but lamely reported here) some time before I purchased my first razor, but the complete impression dwells with me to this day.

The week that followed was filled almost entirely with preparations for my voyage.

I was released from my ordinary duties, but visited the counting-house twice a day, instructing the young man on whom my mantle began already to descend, and closeted at intervals with Mr. Exon, receiving his instructions as to my conduct and proceedings at Bombay. The rest of the time was occupied in driving about the city in a coach with my father, purchasing what might be most necessary for me aboard ship; but my evenings (all save one devoted to Mr. Barnaby and a couple of other friends) were spent with Sylvia, whereof one was appointed for Drury-lane, my father treating the whole of our little party to one of Mrs. Bracegirdle's most charming presentments as Rosalind in "As You Like It."

Here I chanced to stumble against brisk John Auldjo between the acts, and, accompanying him at his earnest solicitation and more than half against my will to a coffee-house just across the street, had a rare escape of being thrashed and plundered by the mohocks who were abroad this night, and (as I shortly afterwards learned) stopped Doctor Jonathan Swift in his chair and treated him with the utmost insolence and contumely; but I kept my own counsel with regard to this affair when I returned to the play-house, preferring rather to treat of the doctor's adventure at supper in our own lodging.

Two days previous to the appointed sailing of the "Forte" we all went on board to view her in the docks just before she dropped down to the Nore. The grand

old ship, though then in that state of general confusion to be expected on the eve of my departure, produced a powerful impression on my country-bred sweetheart and her aunt, who, while they admired her giant proportions and warlike armament, could not find words strong enough to express their wonder at anyone preferring to be cooped up aboard-ship when all the town and country, too, were open and free to him.

I essayed to explain, but my eloquence fell (I feel bound to confess it) monstrously flat, and I utterly failed in my humble endeavour to convince them of the charms of a life at sea.

But when I led them down, with some show of exultation and pride, to behold the cabin which I was destined to inhabit for the next four months of my life, I was more disappointed than ever!

Sundry chests and boxes blocked the doorway, and when I got a man to effect a clearance we crept into a little darkened chamber which Sylvia likened to a pantry, and that a pantry none too sweet, etc.

Everything that I had duly set in order the day before was now tumbled and tossed about and my berth piled with sundry parcels and bundles (none of mine), and the floor impassable by reason of an enormous bale shoved in by someone to suit present convenience. Never was chaos more completely defined! My darling Sylvia was like to cry for sheer vexation, while her Aunt Wynyard fairly held up her mittened hands in horror!

But my father soon came up to my relief and support with the sage remark that "all would come straight before we had been a couple of days to sea." For this service I felt inexpressibly obligated, as I did not care to be put out of conceit of my position before Sylvia and her Aunt Wynyard.

The combined odours of tar, train-oil and rum, and a by no means faint suspicion of bilge-water as well, had their due effect on the latter lady, who was fain to apply her nose to a big bottle of Preston salts which she always carried about in her panier-pocket, and to beseech us to leave the "horrid hole" and come on deck again into the fresh air.

Here I had a good deal to explain, but to which none save Sylvia seemed to give ear; but she did so with so undisguised an appearance of sadness that it went nigh to cut me to the heart.

I led her over all the clearest portions of the deck and up the ladder on to our poop, whence we had free space to view the entire expanse of the vessel, the gigantic and outspreading yards with all their tackle and apparel, the giddy height of the masts, and the red-crossed ancient of Saint George floating sublimely over all.

After a brief survey, whereof she expressed it as vast beyond her comprehension, and therefore fatiguing, I led her back to the place near the gangway in the waist of the ship, where her aunt and my father were awaiting us. Thence along the landing-stage to the wharf our passage was rapid, Miss Wynyard fervently thanking heaven (and aloud, too!) that she trod once more on terra firma, though she expressed it not by such a set term.

"One thing, madam," cried I, plucking up courage to address her (I had just splashed a really very pretty stocking in a puddle), "we have no mud at sea."

"Mud! No!" replied the old lady, "nor aught so clean; but you have worse, I believe."

"We shall see!" said I, briskly, and my father, who looked by no means displeased to find me making the best of it, added: "And Nicholas is right, too! For I have heard all navy-men aver that to see a ship in the hurry and confusion that obtains before departure, and again the same ship at sea fully restored to order, is to have witnessed a complete transfiguration, to which the change from a dull and dirty-looking bit of glass to a rightly faceted rose-diamond is but a poor comparison."

CHAPTER XXVIII.

A LONG FAREWELL.

It had been arranged by my father that Sylvia, her Aunt Wynyard and himself should set out for Warwick the day before that fixed for the sailing of the "Forte."

The ship being now at the Nore, he did not judge it either expedient or necessary that our final farewell should take place on board. Miss Wynyard, indeed, for her part, had conceived a strong prejudice against all vessels whatsoever since her experience of the "Forte" in dock, and was not likely to be much entertained by a trip to the Nore in a small craft.

Sylvia herself had never been on the water in her days; but the real reason, I apprehend, lay in the fact of his strong desire that our leave-taking should take place in the privacy of our own apartments, thus sparing everyone the prolonged grief of watching mutually the disappearing ship and the receding shore, till all should be lost in tears and mist. And, looking back upon this arrangement of my father's after the lapse of so many lustres, I feel I do him but tardy justice where I credit him with an experience of life, a tenderness of heart and a thoughtfulness at the right time for the well-being of others that I surely had once denied him.

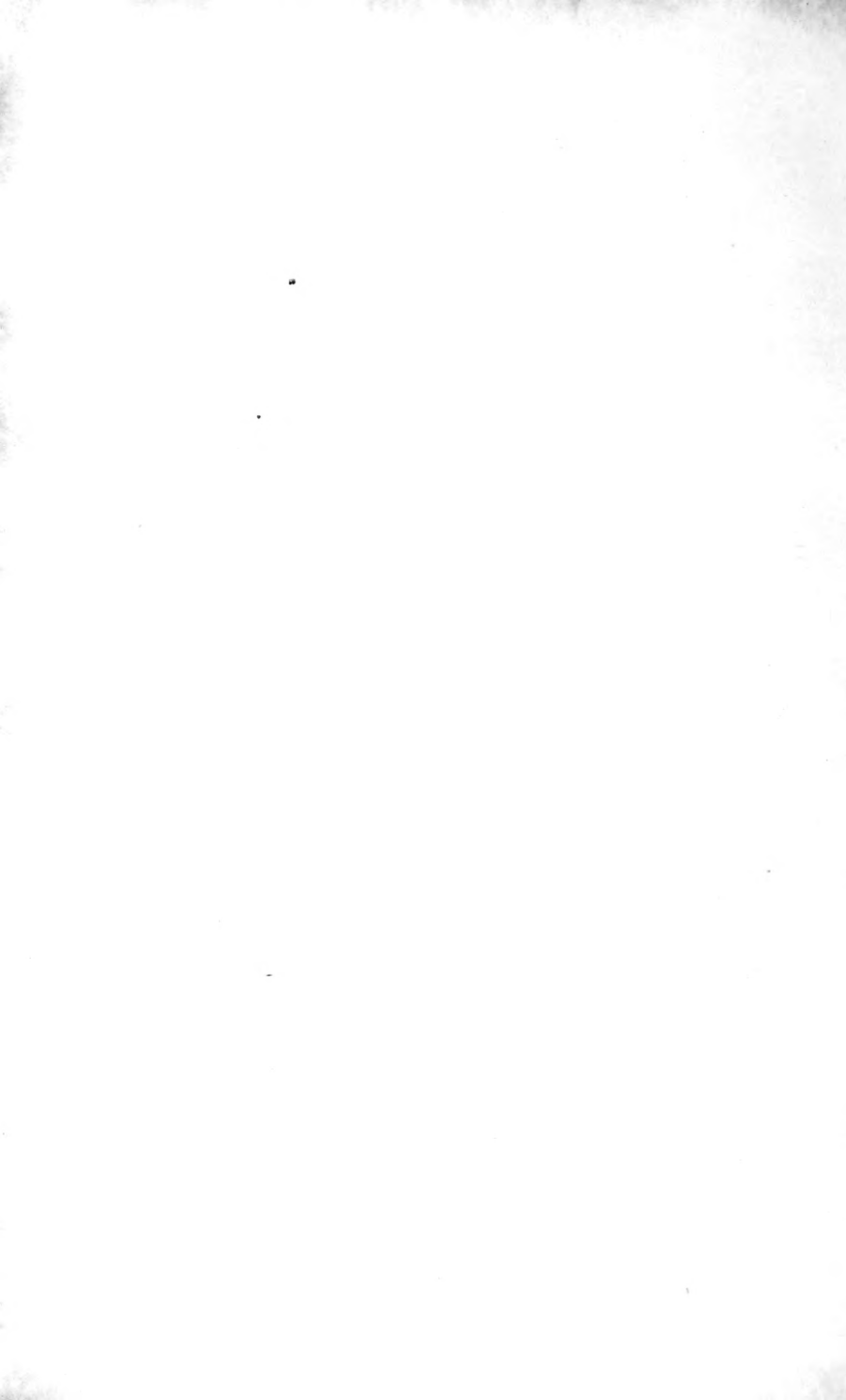
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It went hard with me to resist the joint importunities of John Auldjo and Harry Redmayne for a farewell supper at Button's coffee-house, in Russell-street, off Covent Garden (together with a brief visit to the Society of Symbolical Sailors, of which they now desired me to found a branch at Bombay)!

'Twould have been rudeness itself to have denied



THE "FORTE" EAST INDIAMAN BOUND
FOR BOMBAY.



them absolutely after all the numberless hospitalities I had received at their hands, but I was fain to compromise the matter. So at last, and with as little show of ungraciousness as might be, it was settled that we should have an early dinner at a tavern to be named, also that they should accompany me to the Nore in the lugger and "see the last" of me (as they phrased it) aboard ship, and over a bottle of wine.

By exercising this little piece of what I deemed a wise diplomacy, I managed matters so that Sylvia and my father should not need complain of my devoting my latest hours ashore to newer friends.

Without saying too much, I explained quietly to John that Sylvia being in town the duty of remaining at home the last night was *paramount*—a sentiment in which he acquiesced smilingly on the spot, and that with an air of kindliness and sympathy such I had scarcely expected in my man of the world.

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'Tis all over at last; but, why should I dwell on the final scene in my father's apartments, unwittingly by any eyes save our own; the frequent sorrow and the forecast joy of a future happy meeting, unshared by any but ourselves. It seems most meet that I draw the veil across this picture as I pass.

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Nor the next morning did I go to the coach-office at Temple Bar, vehemently as I desired it, my father clapping his veto on such a proceeding on the instant. So, when I found myself outside the door that night, I was to all intents and purposes, in so far as Sylvia was concerned, either at sea or in Bombay.

Shall I be credited if I put it on record?

My parting with Mr. Barnaby shook me more than all my other partings besides, not even excepting my farewell to Sylvia.

Sylvia was young, and despite all her honest and natural tears, hopeful to a degree.

We had but small fear on the score of not meeting again, and if one allows for those possible accidents

which no amount of wisdom could foresee (and which we were indeed then in no humour to contemplate), we might pretty safely calculate on a happy re-union in the course of a few years at most.

But Mr. Barnaby, who had been more than a father to me, who had advised me, counselled me, and comforted me under all my disappointments, in all my difficulties, who had corrected me at times with a sternness amounting almost to severity, who had found me funds when I was straitened for money, and tended me with all the care of a mother when I was laid up, completely disabled with my broken thigh; this good man, I say, was old and stricken in years, and had of late begun to show signs of "failure," which no one had been quicker to discover than myself, and over which no one could have grieved more.

I admit it candidly. I was at a highly impressionable time of life. I threw myself back in the coach as I left behind me the old lodging where we had been so happy together for so long, and gave way to my emotions (which were too many for me) in a flood of tears.

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By the time I arrived at the tavern, where dinner was ordered for myself and my two friends, I had sufficiently recovered my equanimity, but both John Auldjo and Harry Redmayne noted something as having occurred to "dash my spirits," rallied me pleasantly upon my sweetheart, each at the same time declaring that he would willingly part from his for a season in order to change places with me, and visit the Gorgebus East in search of fortune.

A little dinner served up in his happiest style by my host of the Bolt in Tun, contributed, what with the aid of cheerful converse, and what with that of some really excellent wine, to make new men of us—at all events of myself; and, by the time we arrived at the Tower stairs, where an armed lugger on an errand to one of our convoy (the "Ramilies" to wit), lay awaiting for us; we were as merry a trio as can be imagined.

The wind, which was westerly and strong, was for

the better part of the passage, favourable; but we had our own share of beating and tacking in the lower reaches of the river; and where our men had to get out the sweeps, and tug for it like galley slaves, between Limehouse and Greenwich, I was irresistibly reminded of Mr. Daniel Defoe, and his most practical application of the parallel ruler!

Once clear of the more intricate navigation we spread our canvas again, and aided by the swift outward current of the river, swept handsomely along towards the Nore, where we soon descried the Indian merchant-fleet, with the convoy of ships of war in attendance, all riding gallantly at their moorings.

Here the breeze freshened, and the sea, though turbid and muddy-looking, was prettily crested with foam. 'Twas the most exciting part in the whole cruise, and we dashed in right under the guns of the "Forte," on the starboard quarter, taking a small sea aboard as we did so.

Never had the "Forte" appeared so truly grand, so gigantic, before; the lugger (a very respectable craft) and ourselves, being completely dwarfed in the shadow of her presence.

There she sat, steady and stately as a church, while as for us, we plunged and wallowed and pitched about in the wildest frenzy for a few minutes, while one of our fellows hove a rope to a man standing in the main chains of the "Forte," and another made a steady and skilful clutch at the ladder with the boat-kook.

Here I learned for the first time (and to my great joy) that a lame man in a boat is no lamer than a man who has the full use of his limbs, for I managed to balance myself very readily; and, watching my chance, at the same time grasping one of the shrouds of the lugger whereby to steady me, swung myself briskly up on to the ship's side ladder, and with no further misadventure than a smart ducking from the spray of a broken wave. Indeed, I fared best of us three, for John Auldjo broke his shins in the attempt, swearing terribly thereupon; while Harry Redmayne rattled up the ladder (from which he had been almost swept off), dripping like a triton, but laughing like a schoolboy.

John Auldjo, despite his recent painful mishap, raised his hat at the gangway as he passed in, with a beaming smile and an altogether marine air, such as had done no discredit to an officer of Her Majesty's service, thereby creating (as 'twas ever his knack to do) a most pleasurable and favourable impression on first appearance.

Though he did not express it in words, he completely conveyed the idea of the leading man with a little party under his august protection; while the frankness and complacency of his manner altogether won over our captain; as I did myself the honour of presenting him and Harry Redmayne on the quarter-deck.

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My cabin, into which we all found our way in Indian file, I feel bound to say, would have now fairly astonished Miss Wynyard, and I was downright vexed to think that Sylvia could not get sight of it under its present metamorphosed condition; for being now a person of some consideration on board as representing Mr. Exon's firm, I had a sailor servant told off to attend me, and this good fellow had managed with that consummate skill for arrangement which every *born* seaman possesses, to make the best of everything, and transformed my pantry into a most cheerful and well-ordered apartment.

Passengers in those days out to India were rare birds, like in fact to black swans, as the old Roman hath it. So we were not crowded for room; but, in any case, I had my own cabin entirely to myself.

John, who looked on my arrangements with the critical eye of a man who had made the passage to Holland and back, and once seen the coast of France with his own eyes (from a distance), protested that everything was monstrous proper and well-ordered, but added that aboard of most vessels going foreign that he had visited, the cabin wall was garnished (especially in the case of younger officers) with the portrait of the affianced beauty left in tears behind.

This hint (possibly undesignedly thrown out) was

not lost upon myself, for I thereupon unlocked my big sea-chest, already securely cleated to the floor, and taking from the little narrow-lidded division across one end thereof, a framed miniature of the loveliest of her sex, hung it to a nail in the wall directly over my bed.

"The tutelary divinity and guardian," cried John, "being now hoisted into position: needs must that we pour out the usual libation in her honour, and that while time serves."

Hereupon we all retired to the great cabin, where Captain Markham, joining us at my earnest invitation, we sat down to a great bowl of steaming hot rum punch, wherein, after pledging each other cordially, we drank sundry loyal and personal toasts, a happy and prosperous voyage, and all wives and sweethearts left behind.

The next few minutes were spent in numerous charges and messages for the shore, and with many mutual promises to write regularly, we all made for the gangway, beneath which the saucy little lugger danced and pawed the surges as she chafed at her moorings like a restive horse.

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The lugger fended off and rapidly filled away for the "Ramilies," which lay well out to seaward of us; and John Auldjo, standing erect in the stern-sheets, with both hands to his mouth (the better to convey his speech), bawled out something touching Sylvia and the picture. I could not guess the sense, as in truth his accents were considerably tempest-tossed.

CHAPTER XXIX.

BLUE-PETER.

London was no more to be seen, yet could I not forbear casting a longing eye into the dim gray distant cloudland, which concealed it from my view.

To me it was as a city of the past. I seemed living in another period, re-building streets, and peopling the ways. Then I dwelt thereon so intently that I came to regard it once more as of the present; following misty space beyond with the characters of bygone the progress of the coach that was bearing away my beloved Sylvia towards Warwick; then, in a flight of imagination accompanying John and Harry Redmayne from the Tower stairs to some favourite shrine of Bacchus or of Momus; looking in at the Jerusalem (after the manner of the companion of Asmodeus in the "Devil on Two Sticks"), and listening to the political oratory of old Mr. Masterman, who regarded the present attitude of the French King towards the Grand Turk with disfavour, if not with positive suspicion. Then, by a not unnatural transition, to the dear old lodging at Mrs. Counsell's, where that always pleasant and rosy-cheeked little baggage, Molly, was bringing Mr. Barnaby his slippers as he sat solitary by the fire with the "Evening Journal" on his knee, and a long white pipe of Oronooko between his firm and thin, yet benevolent lips. Thereafter, still pursuing my round of travel, I found Mr. Defoe solus in his study in a scratch wig very much awry, his knee-strings loose, and his pale and severe features puckered up with wrinkles, in the very throes and agony of composition. Next, Mr. Addison (somewhat flushed, methought), at Button's, in the rare company of Mr. Phillips, Colonel Brett, Mr. Budgell, and Sir Richard Steele, in animated discussion of the "Beggars' Opera," that merry Newgate pastoral which

Dr. Swift (as I learned), had so successfully suggested to Mr. Gay. From these rapidly succeeding reveries I was roused by Captain Markham, who had just begun to pace the deck and, watching the skies, predicted a change in the wind before morning.

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When I went below it was already late, and we could hear the bugles and the drums beating tattoo aboard the frigates forming our convoy; and as I looked out from the port hole of my cabin I noted the reflections from the tall poop-lanterns of the fleet glimmering merrily on the water.

A rubber with the surgeon, the mate, and the purser (though in truth I had as lief been excused), and thereafter a can of flip among us by way of nightcap; and so to bed, where, being already well spent with the fatigues and excitement of the day, I slept soundly, and so without dreams.

During the night the wind shifted and hauled round to the north.

I was on deck among the very earliest, and with all the enthusiasm of youth, watching for the dawn.

'Twas the first time I had ever seen the sun rise over the sea—a sight I shall never forget—as the veil of mist lifted by unseen hands revealed the glowing features of the morn reflected in the golden mirrors of a thousand waves.

Our little fleet (including the convoy) consisted of fifteen vessels (all told). Of East-India merchantmen we had the "Forte," of 800 tons; the "Nassau," 750; the "Royal Oak," 700; the "True Briton," 700; the "Raleigh," 500; the "Hope," 500; the "Clytemnestra," 600; the "India," 600; the "British Merchant," 500; and the "Duke of Marlborough," 600 tons; our powerful convoy being represented by five of Her Majesty's ships, namely the "Ajax," "Boscobel," "Tonnant," and "Blenheim," and the "Ramilies," carrying Commodore Rowley's broad pendant at the fore.

My attention was particularly drawn to the "Ramilies," which now lay to starboard of us since the change of wind, and I observed that her fore-topsail was loosed, and a signal flying at the main which

latter was repeated from ship to ship. Presently our men aboard the "Forte," urged by the shrill pipe of the boatswain, swarmed aloft to loose sail; and, all being well ready below, our ears were saluted with the hoarse cry of "All hands, Up anchor, Ahoy!" A lithe and lissome lad, with a violin in his hand, sprang like a cat on to the capstan-head, where he took up his station as the presiding genius of the ceremony. Speedily shipping the capstan-bars, and falling into their places (two men to a bar), they began, slowly at first, to tramp round; when one of the number, blessed with a loud voice of no mean compass, started the inevitable song.

He got through the first verse entirely alone; then the violin came to his aid; and with a rousing chorus from all hands, the great machine (groaning as it revolved), gathered way and sped by degrees; while one stout fellow in an attitude not to be envied, sat doubled up at the foot of the capstan, keeping the coils of the great hempen cable straight against the barrel. Over him, his comrades at the bars, had to leap, every time they crossed his position, just as one may see sheep following their leader at a jump over any small obstacle.

The first verse of this, the first anchor-song or chantey I had ever heard ("My Pretty London Girl"), was set to a plaintive air abounding in sudden transitions and decorated with sundry queer falsetto flourishes, which produced a singular effect upon me, as it rose and trilled, and died away upon the ear. The words ran somewhat after this fashion, as well as memory serves me:—

*I loved a pretty London girl,
And oh! my London girl loved me.
Her cheeks were cherry; her teeth were pearl,
Her bright locks, thread of gold in curl,
When first I went to sea-ea-ea!
I'm bound, my love, for far Injee,
Upon the tumbling, rolling sea,
Cries I, "Sweet Nan!" "Dear Jack!" cries she,
"Oh! When will you come back to me,
To me, to me, from far Injee?"*

The leading voice had got no further in this rude composition when the mate, who perceived tough work before them all, as the anchor had a very firm bite, roared out:

"Stash sentiment, Mister Wilson! Give us '*Julius Cæsar*.' That's a song of all others to give resurrection to cold iron! Bend your backs to it lads, and start her fairly!"

"Now, young cat-gut scraper; don't grudge the horsehair!"

Whereupon began a quaint and strangely worded ditty as ever man listened to. Deep, rich, harmonious and powerful, which seemed to put new nerve and force into the bending backs and sinewy arms of the men straining at the bars.

*When Julius Cæsar came to town,
He battered the Tow'r of London down,
And his guns were heard far out at sea,
They frighted the maids of Pevensey
With their thunder;
Much I wonder,
Who sarved the guns that day!*

*He marched his men right up to the Fleet,
But a ball brought him to in Watling Street,
And they carried him out,
With his toes to the fore,
So that Cæsar never troubled us no more.
With a heigh ho! Julius Cæsar, raro!*

*Then, Cæsar's wife, she tackled our Lord Mayor,
And she was a lady of beauty rare.
Says she to him, with a toss of the head,
"I'll thank you for my Cæsar, alive or dead!"
With a heigh ho! Julius Cæsar, raro!*

This latter song, for reasons profounder than any contained in the epitome of all my philosophy, had the effect of starting our ponderous stream anchor from its oozy bed; and, in less time than it takes me

to relate the same, it hung dripping from our bows with a big lump of blue mud in one of its palms.

Hoisting top-sails and top gallants, sheeting home, and hauling on the bowlines etc., we had wilder and merrier music still, and such choruses, truly as one never finds ears for ashore.

I have only space for one of these; but here it is:—

*Jack Spaniard, ho! Jack Spaniard,
I've got you by the lanyard,
You black-faced; murdering rogue.
Yeo! Ho!*

*It's taken us a week, Jack!
A week, a day, and more, Jack!
A-scouring on your track.
Yeo! Ho!*

*But, Basto! Don Alvaro!
Proud Mendez Bastimento,
You haughty cut-throat Spaniard, ho!
We've banged you, and we've battered you,
We've blasted and we've shattered you;
Your Pateraroes made reply,
But we climbed your smoking quarter,
Unheeding gun or mortar;
For British tars must do or die!
With cutlass 'tween the teeth, Jack!
And pistol in each fist, Jack!
Huzza, boys! Forward, who's afeard?
And we made the boldest stand back,
For we had you on the hip, Jack!
And singed your big, black beard,
Yeo! Ho!*

* * * *

This song, like the venerable ballad of "Chevy-Chase" seemed to run on without end; and, as yard after yard swung slowly creaking up in position, so as best to dispose the canvas to the favouring gale, we had all manner of expression given to certain byegone bloody doings on the Spanish Main, together with much racy

description of plate, prize-moneys, pieces-of-eight, silks, golden chains, altar candlesticks, and doubloons galore—all lawful capture.

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The "Ramilies" fired a gun to leeward, and our flotilla, now fairly in motion, we made our offing good, trending south-westerly in the form of a crescent; the "Ramilies," with her broad pendant and ancient displayed in the van; the "Ajax" on our left wing; the "Tonnant" on our right; and the "Blenheim," with the "Boscobel" bringing up the rear.

The voyage had fairly begun, and by noon we were abreast of Cape Grisnez on the Picardy coast. And here, I truly began to *feel* the ship lively under my feet in the Channel swell.

CHAPTER XXX.

MY VOYAGE INDIAWARDS.

In the weather that followed, my conduct fell marvellously short of the heroic. I desire, in fact, to make confession with all becoming humility that I was grievously afflicted with the sea sickness.

'Tis a disease against which I am long since proof, but I am given to understand that my present enviable condition is due to my having given way in the beginning and fairly resigned myself to fate.

While the distemper was yet upon me, I was assuredly the most miserable of all men living; the aching head, the giddiness too, that reminded me of a sheep in the staggers, the perpetual rise and fall (as it were) of a tidal wave within, the weariness of the eye, its intolerance of light, its dislike, and the malaise at view of a swinging, a rocking, or a rolling object. All these barely defined symptoms convey but a feeble idea of my condition, or of the straight in which I found myself.

I tried, for a few seconds, but in vain, to interest myself in a passing vessel which was plunging heavily in the gray water of the channel as she drove past us, making for London; her ancient (just displayed to inform us of her nationality), blowing away into very tatters at her peak. But the mere contemplation of this (to me) otherwise pleasing and soul-inspiring sight, made me worse than ever, so forcibly does the eye act upon the brain, and the brain, in its turn, upon the internal economy.

In my position where I now lay, stretched out on top of a hen coop on the lee-side of the poop, with my elbow hooked through a back stay, I received in full all the flying spray of a wave, which, charging slap-dash against our starboard quarter, dispersed itself in a huge shower of briny pearls.

I leapt up, and shook myself, feeling fresher, though still extremely weak; and, steadying myself against the plunging of the ship, by grasping one stanchion after another in my progress, managed at length to descend without mishap by the poop-ladder to the quarter-deck.

The planks were wet and slippery, a fine, grey, misty drizzle permeating the entire atmosphere. The good ship lay, well heeled over to the gale, and as I afterwards learned, not only stripped of her top gallants, but with a single reef in each of her stout top sails as well.

My friend, the chief mate, helping me to find my way forward, brought to before a sack of something leaning against the cook's galley. From this coarse and earthy looking receptacle he pulled out a great Spanish onion, which he handed to me; then, taking another, and crunching the same between his teeth, bade me follow his example. I never enjoyed a morsel more in my life. The crisp freshness of the onion itself, the pungency of its odour, none too rough nor too racy in the open air, and the agreeable warmth it diffused throughout my system, made the beginning of a very pronounced recovery.

Thereafter the mate got me privily from the cook into his own cabin a bowl of smoking hot beef broth, and a Dutch rusk therewith which, being despatched, we sat till I was well assured that the deadly qualmishness had entirely passed off. Whereupon this kindly, sea-going Samaritan in yellow oil-skin, and smelling all over like a pot of varnish, forced upon me a jorum of right Nantz, hot, but without sugar or spice. After this, my strength returned; my eyes lit up again, and I longed to tread the deck and see everything that was to be seen, so long as daylight might last.

In fact, I did follow him out, my cheeks once more ruddy, and my hands red, and tingling with new life to the fingers ends.

The ship bounded on her way, like a creature born to breast the seas, which rose and heaved ahead of us, only to bow a salute in passing, and sink again cream-

ing under our counter, but to mount and swell once more, portentously in our wake.

Now that the gale had full dominion over her widely spreading canvas, she lay over to it, uncommon steady, shouldering aside the billows like some strong swimmer in a race for a prize; the foam flying off in steamy bursts from her prow to windward, and to lee, after a most inspiriting fashion.

I had now both the curiosity and the courage to look out for our consorts, and the convoy of our company.

We were by this time in extended order, every vessel being well in view; and a monstrous pretty effect it had, the leading vessels gray and blue in the distance, but relieving sharply against a pale and windy-looking afternoon sky, plentifully streaked with mares' tails.

Those abreast of us, partly in shadow, partly in shine, and those astern, completely lighted up, and flying along with full-sheeted and snowy-bosomed sails, as if in act to run us down; but we maintained our position right manfully, and, ere sunset, I had the proud satisfaction of watching the manœuvre of taking in another reef in our top sails, as the night wore all the appearance of a good blow to follow.

Witnessing the feats of our bold seamen aloft, whether in the netted tops, or scrambling up the ladders against the giddy incline of the rocking masts, or getting out on to the dangerous yards, I was filled with breathless admiration at the boldness, the alacrity, the sheer dexterity, and all those cheery little snatches of song that somehow managed to reach my ear, malgré all the pipings of the increasing gale.

We make out something to the southward like a drifting mass of fleecy cloud, and hear a humming sound tremulous and booming, like summer thunder, but mellowed by the distance.

This our captain declares to be the noise of guns, and soon (but at a safe remoteness), we descry a chase, wherein the smaller and lighter vessel of the two draws off, and makes good her escape from the pursuer; but as neither were going our course 'twas

deemed unlikely that any of our convoy would risk the pursuit of the heavier craft, which, from her build and trim, and the cut of her jib, the captain announced to be one of those pests of the channel—a Dunkirk privateersman.

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She veered round and headed away for the coast of France, and was thus soon lost to view in the haze; as for the chase, she flying lighter than ourselves, and trending seaward several miles in advance, 'twas hull down before nightfall, and we saw her no more. But after this pretty distinct warning everyone was, as may be imagined, strictly on the *qui vive*. And the officers aloft, both in tops and crosstrees, swept the horizon with their prospect-glasses, while the light served, in search of suspicious craft, for in truth we had no mind to black bread and water, and foul straw in a French prison—but in any case we were ready for the fight.

Towards night, the wind still freshening, we got our top lights up—the leading vessels only of the squadron keeping the tall poop-lanterns burning—and these, we of the after division followed merrily and with right good will.

We had a remarkably clear run down Channel, avoiding by our strict vigilance all evil chances of the road; neither knocking up against, nor ourselves being thrust aside, by any passing ships; and of these especially between the Isle of Wight and Falmouth we hailed a goodly number and passed more.

The last indication of our beloved country, after Land's End, was the light in some fisher's cot on one of the Scillys. To this we gave a wide berth, and I shuddered as I thought of the brave old "Association" foundered there with Sir Cloudesley and all his company aboard.

The wind was whisling madly through our rigging as I went below, but as the light from the binnacle-lamp irradiated our steersman's countenance, I gathered from his bold and trustful features an augury of safety for the night.

Our first night on the ocean, too.

A wild time we had of it in the Bay of Biscay, which methought had been better named the Sea of the Sierras, so mountainous were the waves.

But this over and passed, we fetched Madeira.

The sight of this pleasant land, after all our tossing, tumbling, groaning, and straining, was truly delightful. The long range of vine-clad hills, broken up into gorges and diversified with valleys, opened, one after the other, on the view as we swept along the coast. Wreaths of mist which had veiled the gracious bosoms of those vernal vales, soon began to disperse and melt away like untimely snow at the presence of the morning sun.

We distinctly saw the Roadstead, the town of Funchal, the villas, the convents and churches, the bells whereof calling the faithful to prayers as we passed.

Hoisting out our ancients we treated the Madeira folk to a spectacle as imposing as any they must have witnessed for many months past; for 'tis no mean thing (I hold) to mirror in one's eye at once so proud a convoy, and so rich and powerful a charge of frigate-built and armed ships as we must have presented to the view, or so brave an array of snowy ancients, each bearing as its charge the scarlet cross of Saint George, the patron of our Merrie England.

As we commenced to clear the land, whose aspect was changing continually with our position and opening up newer and more marvellous beauties at every stride, I made out a rocky point or cape, sentinelled by a solitary palm tree—the first palm indeed that I had ever seen (not in a picture book). 'Twas but a single tree, of what exact sort I know not, yet it impressed me as an earnest of the coming fulfilment of a dream of my childhood, and brought me face to face with an actual world of warmer climes, and spoke to me as the west wind whispered amid its wavering plumes, of America, the Indies, and the Spanish Main.

.

Our progress hence, southerly, into the tropic belt, was marked by favouring breezes from W. of N., a climate that became daily more divine, and a sea and sky of an ever-increasing intensity of blueness.

In this the timorous and glittering flying fish "put up" (to use a sportsman's phrase) in coveys, spread their bright wings and soared a space mid air; then, as their delicate and filmy pinions dried, they dipped, but only to rise again with suddenness, and dart off in all the hurry and confusion of despair in another direction. Nor was I long in assigning a cause, for a whole squadron of glorious, silver-sided fishes, like to, but much larger than, our largest mackerel, charged along with arching backs and flashing mail, in swift pursuit.

These I speedily smoked for dolphins; and, an old weather-beaten quarter-master leaning over the rail, whereon rested his broad, brown hand, thus named them to me on the instant. 'Twas but a trifle (this affair), yet the speedy confirmation of my judgment builded me up mightily in my own strength; and when I came thereafter to hazard guesses, I oftentimes, to my real delight, came out, correct to the letter.

The whale I knew; the tumbling, rollicking porpoise I knew, but mistook Albacore for Bonito.

While, however, I exult in my discernment, I must not neglect to plead guilty to once running for our captain's prospect-glass to make out a Portuguese man-o'-war declared to be in the offing, but which my otherwise unaided eyesight entirely failed to discover.

'Twas not many seconds thereafter that I learned he had hauled alongside; and indeed, in the space of a few minutes, we had his Portuguese Majesty's captain aboard of us in a bucket of clear, sparkling, tropical seawater. A pretty pink and purple fellow he was, mottled all over with markings of maroon and ultramarine, like to a nautilus in figure, and garnished like that creature with the most delicate filaments and tentacles.

Englishman-like, I must needs touch, and indeed, I had my just reward, for the sharp salutation returned, carried me back, as if by magic, to Warwick, where, in my third year, the maid had incontinently let me roll, half naked, into a bed of stinging nettles. Henceforward it was a good joke against myself every time I was seen to take out the captain's glass from the

wooden brackets over the companion, that I was looking out for the Portuguese colours.

* * * *

This, dear descendant, is not a diary so far, though I honestly kept one aboard the "Forte," entering with some pains the latitude, the longitude, distance run since last observation, etc., etc.

Appearance of the skies and clouds, and the like; also, all such events occurring whether aboard our own vessel, or our consorts, or the frigates of the convoy, as might come to my ears.

In one time we crossed the Equator and entered the Southern Hemisphere; but, as this befel about midnight, we had to miss the time-honoured saturnalia, memorable in these parts, and proceeded peacefully through a sea of liquid sapphire on our voyage.

In the southern tropic, calms and much visiting, with interchange of civility among our captains and invitations to dinner aboard of Her Majesty's ships forming the convoy.

This filled up our afternoons for some six days, wherein we became acquainted with many of our fellow-voyagers, had merry bouts of single stick and fencing, besides broadsword exercise, music by the bands and little boating parties with a couple of philosopher naturalists—these very delightful indeed, and wherein notably we picked up not a few rare trifles that had been highly prized in London (I'll warrant) for the shows.

* * * *

One afternoon a couple of flying fish, hotly pursued by dolphins, fell aboard us by the main chains while endeavouring to make good their escape. One I captured in favour of my friend the naturalist, Mr. Bateman, aboard the "Boscobel," but the other one was pounced upon by our second mate, who afterward declared to me, that well peppered and marinated with salt and vinegar in the frying pan, and served up hot, it made a tasty morsel enough.

I have as yet but named with worshipful admiration the sunrise and sunset of the tropic region; but how shall I essay to limn the all-wondrous and spiritual beauty of the night in these latitudes, where the large-eyed and unwinking stars gaze placidly on the breathing deep, and a moon, magnificent beyond the sublimest flight of the poet's imaginings, dominates the scene?

The ocean is all a-ripple with molten silver, and Venus radiant as Cynthia herself, burns like a comet on the dancing tide. The warm orange light streaming from the port holes and carven stern and quarter galleries of both convoy and squadron, and the broader and more glowing rays from the great poop-lanterns, harmonize grandly with the silver of the moon, while the dark reflections of embattled hull and towering masts writhe like watersnakes in never-ending coils, as the silent wave heaves in its gentle sleep.

Music, be it ever so enchanting ashore, falls no-wise short of absolute Arabian enchantment in the glamour of a tropic night; that is, where the player hath both the skill and the full mastery of the instrument.

We had two such performers of our company; the one aboard the "Boscobel," the other on the "Ajax."

Offt have these sweet musicians kept me entranced and wholly enraptured with their strains, while I leaned solitary against the bulwarks of the "Forte," listening with all my soul.

One had a lute or guitar he had acquired in Spain, to which he would sing love songs in the Spanish tongue; the other winded a clear-toned French horn—none of your cracked and blaring brazen implements, but a trump that sounded in the mellow distance like that of an angel, the herald of good news. Also, but in concert on these divine moon feasts (as I was wont to style them), I loved to hearken to the full band aboard of our commodore, the "Ramilies," playing martial and soul-inspiring airs, with a poetry in the drum and cymbal clangour, such as I never realized before; but for me specially the two instruments I hinted at previously, each sounding from a different

direction as the ships lay scattered abroad; and these described to me, as much of Heaven in wordless music as directed my thoughts in grateful, but humble, adoration and worship to the Infinite Author of all these wondrously perfect and unapproachable beauties that gladdened my existence. When I consider all these and the like, I look on the crosses and irritations of the Torrid Zone by day, as wholly unworthy of mention; though (I must confess it), nowhere on the varied face of the globe is the English temper more tried with the heat of the sun, and nowhere is the Englishman more testy and choleric.

The splash of a passing porpoise as he rolled over, receiving all the silver of the moon on his curving flank, was but an additional feature of beauty in the entire conception; and the lapping and poppling of the cool water under our bends and against our full-bosomed bow, was a music to be felt.

There was but one want, but one solitary blank in the unspeakable beauty of this silvern paradise.

Need I give it words?

I sighed for my far-away Sylvia to share it with me, but derived no small consolation from the thought that *she* now looked on the self-same moon, which would be *as* beautiful to her young imagination, seen through an English mist, as to me in the soft, clear, purple of the tropic night.

Music of another kind we had—homely and full of suggestion—the distance and the smoothness of the watery plain softening and beautifying all.

The voices of the sea boys, the trill of the boat-swain's pipes, the barking of a dog aboard the "Royal Oak." Of all these the latter filled me with thoughts of England, but more particularly of Warwick.

—J.R.

* * * *

But we were not destined to linger too long in these Elysian seas, whereof their sun sets and rises in a glory, a majesty and magnificence—elsewhere unknown—and which demands a Saint John of Patmos,

the Poet of the Apocalypse, to render its miraculous beauty in fitting words of sublimest imagery.

The wind freshening, we found ourselves, ere we well knew it, in the region of the trades, and it was the north-east trade that now sat on the shoulder of our sail.

In regular order (as if for review) our gallant fleet plowed milky furrows in the unspeakable blue of the Southern Atlantic; shifting nor brace nor bowline for the full space of three weeks, our sea only a trifle less blue, but the breeze fresh, and the air more in accord with British lungs than all the balmy and luxurious atmospheres of the southern tropic.

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I essayed to do some work, and let any one of those who may have essayed the like, under my circumstances, be my true witness, and declare how hard it is at sea either to read or to write continuously.

The constant round of eating and drinking, the varying succession of trivial events at very short intervals, the politeness demanded towards those who desired to talk or walk, or play games of hazard with one; not to mention the siesta in which every idle man at sea is so fain to indulge. These, and the like, subdivide time into so many and such tiny spaces, that one is tempted to fling aside both book and pen, till one shall be enabled to get ashore, and be at peace.

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Preparing always for India, I availed myself of every little piece of information I could possibly acquire—whether from the officers of the squadron or of the convoy—writing down daily and in brief in my log whatever I deemed most serviceable or meet for my purpose.

From our purser, Mr. Bagshawe, I borrowed a little manuscript book of tables of the Indian weights and measures, bearing special reference to the Bombay markets; and these I not only transcribed, but also

repeated aloud to myself as I paced the poop of an afternoon. But even here I was not without let or hindrance; as for example, taking my little limp-backed pamphlet, doubled comfortably over in my hand, I begin to repeat my lesson:

8 ruttees=1 masha.

12 mashas=1 tola.

80 tolas . . .

"Halloa, there, Mr. Rous! Clear away out of that, please. We want to tackle the lazy guy of the spanker boom. . . ."

Or else:

"It's 'bout ship, Mr. Rous! Get over to windward, please, sir!"

"Aye! aye! and thank ye," is my response, limping out of the way; but, determined not to be beat, I resume as follows:—

"80 tolas=1 seer.

40 seers=I maund."

"Mr. Rous!" cries a cheery voice that I recognize on the instant for the surgeon's. "Will you kindly step this way for a moment?"

"With pleasure," is my reply, but I continue bravely as I tramp along towards the poop-ladder to descend to the apartment of our Æsculapius:

"And 20 maunds=I kandy, or 560 lbs. English," thus bringing my table to its just conclusion.

I clap the little book in my coat pocket, determined to try the bazaar weights and the native jewellers' troy at next convenient opportunity.

'Tis but a solitary instance; nevertheless, it serves to show that my gradual knowledge came to me under circumstances of constant difficulty and interruption.

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All the way to the Cape of Good Hope I am much exercised in my mind on the subject of the monsoons, of which I hear somewhat by parcels on all hands.

A monsoon, I have decided at last, is a trade wind excited to madness, having but this measure of method in its vagaries; to wit, that after blowing between five and six months in one stated direction, it goes 'bout ship, and blows for five or six months (just to mend matters) in the direction exactly opposite. For example, the south-west monsoon begins in April and blows on till October, when it breaks up all in a white fury, and returns as a north-easter.

These winds I have ascertained take their rise between the doldrums and the tropic belt in either hemisphere; but the exact cause of their motion is likely to be food for profound speculation to our bold navigators for a long time to come. In the China seas (as I hear), the break up of the monsoon is attended with storm and hurricane. So in the Arabian and Indian seas, but in much milder form.

Our seamen spoke of catching the monsoon, as if this were a consummation most devoutly to be desired. Others, again, talked of the monsoon as of some species of hurricane devastating all before it and carrying cloud enough on its wings to deluge whole continents with its rain flood.

Some hoped such a thing might come to pass before the monsoon. Others again said it were but wise to defer such and such a project till after the monsoon be over.

These are only sayings overheard by myself, but as I did not catch any reference as to hemisphere, nor as to whether it was the N.E. or S.W. monsoon, nor indeed whether as afloat or ashore, I grew sorely puzzled over it.

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Our second mate, Mr. Bythesea, kindly essayed to explain matters on the chart, and gave me the Persian root of the word answering to our "season" and sounded pretty much as if spelled "monsum."

He averred it was mildest in mid-ocean but gathering force in its progress towards its goal, swelled into a very fierce gale, bearing along with it vast, piled-up masses of rain-cloud. But the beauty and service of a

monsoon lay in its regularity and the consequent full dependence to be placed on its times of going and coming.

I learned all I could, but as for the hidden mystery of the monsoon, *that* I have never plumbed, not even up to this time of writing.

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After rounding the craggy and sombre Cape of Storms, which we did on the 2nd April, about nightfall, with a stiff gale from the westward, and in the midst of a most confused and mountainous sea, we got quite naturally out of the set of the great Cape current into that styled the Mozambique.

Captain Markham had determined on trying the inner passage. We therefore proceeded northerly, with a stiff off-shore quarter wind, leaving Cape Corrientes to larboard, and soon astern, as also Quillimane and Mozambique, thence (still making good running), we crossed the Capricorn tropic—Madagascar lying far away, mist shrouded and invisible, toward the east—and here we fell in with the S.W. monsoon, and a more steady, delightful, and pleasant working breeze I never remember.

"*This!* a monsoon?" cried I to one of our quarter-masters. "Why, 'tis more of a trade!"

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"Aye, sir!" was the rejoinder. "And a kindly young trade, too!"

* * * *

Trending north-easterly, we speedily left to windward the Comoro Isles (where is the great Johana), also Zanguebar; the bare indication of the latter coast line, and island on the chart, recalling Mr. Masterman and his speculations touching the recent attitude of the French King towards the Sultan of Zanguebar, and at which I could not forbear a smile as I remembered the occasion of it.

Thereafter we crossed the Equator yet a second time, and while in the latitude of the Cape Gardafui, between

Socotra and the Babelmandeb Straits, we passed an Arab dhow, slave-laden, from Mr. Masterman's beloved Zanguebar, towards Aden.

She was an awkward looking, box built affair, with big latteens, trimmed very much down by the bows, but held her wind uncommon well.

Beyond a French cruiser, heading up for the Malabar coast, we sighted nothing till we brought-to in Bombay roads. Here came off our pilot—the first Indian seaman of this rank that I had ever encountered.

Very deftly he took us in, though he but followed in the wake of our commodore, who had his own special pilot aboard the "Ramilies."

Passing about a mile and a half to the eastward of the light on the southern extremity of Colaba Island, we thus managed to avoid a dangerous sunken rock that blocks a portion of the entrance, thence again skirting a huge submerged sandbank, known as "The Middle Ground," about a mile and a quarter from the town of Bombay, on the long and narrow island of the same name, we all came handsomely to an anchor under cover of the guns of the fort, on the 5th June (a Tuesday).

NOTE.—Captain Markham says:—"It is not quite a hundred years since this great city, with its fort, dock-yard, and arsenal, belonged to the Crown of Portugal. Now we hold it—a strong place ready made to hand. And that Portugal held it at a good price one can guess *that*, since she ceded it as part of 'the dowry of the Queen of our King Charles II.' "

CHAPTER XXXI.

AT BOMBAY, WHERE I FALL SICK OF THE FEVER.

I went to live at the factory or, as some style it, the British factory. We mess together there (as Jack hath it), that is to say, the gentlemen of the other English agencies, and myself.

We have a prodigious number of native servants, each attendant having his own peculiar office and title; and some of those coffee-coloured gentlemen, though far too high and mighty on their two annas a day to eat their meals before each other, are none too proud to wait upon us, whom they regard as pagans and infidels, albeit of high degree.

Our factory (so called) is an establishment of such consideration that we have a chaplain specially appointed to preach to us on Sundays, and minister to our general, spiritual welfare, as well. This gentleman is likewise a most skilful and accurate player at whist.

Our principal acquaintance outside the factory walls lies among the officers of the garrison, or the fort people, as we are chiefly wont to style them—also their wives.

Often do we join over a bowl of rack punch (that you could not better at the Grecian, nor the Cocoa-Tree.) After this fashion, Fort and Factory; and long may they flourish!

Among the Fort officials is a little, brown-faced fellow, with a pair of wicked black eyes, and a hook nose; who, by his looks, might, mayhap, have had an Indian mother.

This is Captain Tadcaster, of the Royal Regiment of Artillery. He is the very living embodiment of your romancer-virtuoso; and some of his stories are too preposterous even for the settled Oriental gravity

of our waiters who (without perhaps comprehending a single word) so appreciate the effect upon the company, that they roll their yellow eyeballs in agony as they smile covertly across the table from behind our chairs at one another.

When it is borne in mind that the captain has the habit of making oath to the truth of all he avers, and as he tells a good deal of truth, blended with a fair amount of what is absolutely false, a man is but too apt to become puzzled, and fail to discriminate therein with due correctness.

But there is, nevertheless, a rare charm in the fellow's conversation which, when he is neither fire-eating nor moralizing (of which latter he has, indeed, the prettiest trick in the world), reminds one of "The Thousand and One Nights," or those wild tales we used to hear about County Guy and the Dun Cow, in the nursery in our dear old Warwick home.

His condition I took for that of a bachelor, with a fair allowance over and above his not too magnificent military pay.

He was good natured and joyous, when sober; flighty and excitable in his cups, but a demon incarnate when fairly intoxicated, his Oriental eyes flashing with a latent malice and hatred such as a mere chance acquaintance had never smoked in him previously.

It was not hard to trace him through all these three said stages on any convivial evening, whether in Fort or Factory.

At first, jovial, kindly, full of merry talk, perhaps also somewhat boastful withal; then, particularly if at *ecarté* (which was indeed his chief employ as well as pastime), testy, crotchety, and indulging in braggadocio.

Later on in the evening you would find him accusing his best friend of cheating; flinging down his hand on the matted floor, and consigning the whole generation of Factory folk to perdition; promising thereupon with many high-sounding and soldier-like oaths, to "push back the whole crawling civilian brood into the flames," should by any good luck the establishment happen to catch fire.

In answer to various enquiries set afoot by myself when first I landed in Bombay, I received news, to my great sorrow, of the death of Dick Holbrook, which had taken place some six months back.

'Twas a grievous disappointment to me not to have met my old companion again. I had promised myself not only the renewal of our friendship, but the proof to himself, evidenced by my whole conduct and deportment, that I was even more his friend than he had seemed to believe, when I last parted from him in Thames-street.

From Dick, too, I might have learned more about Bombay in general and Mr. Exon's affairs, as there conducted, in one afternoon, than from a comparative stranger in the course of a week.

The stranger (though it smacks of incivility to bestow so cold an appellation on a gentleman with whom I had been corresponding in the way of business for years back (in short, Mr. Exon's agent), proved a most excellent instructor. We lived under the same roof at the Factory, and naturally had a good many things in common.

Of these, however, it will be sufficient to indicate two, viz., a mutual regard for the memory of poor Dick Holbrook, and also a mutual interest in Mr. Exon's affairs in the East Indies.

Mr. Bacon was a thin, sallow-faced man, of acute perceptions and rigidly temperate habit. He was wiry and active to a degree, and had (as he told me) never known a day's sickness during the ten years he had represented Mr. Exon at the Factory; while he could count from memory the tombstones in the little God's acre over the hill there, of those younger, stouter (and, while they lasted), more active than himself, who had succumbed to the Indian climate. This one through self-neglect; that one from brandy-pawnee; another (but that might well have happened elsewhere) from a lunge under the guard in some silly duel; and so on, and so forth.

His counsel to myself was to take ordinary care for my general health, to eschew plentiful potations, and all excess in the pleasures of the table; to maintain a quiet mind, and avoid quarrel and cards, which he

observed (in Bombay at all events), mean one and the same thing.

"Ecarté," said he, "is but too apt to find its culmination in tierce and cartè, that is, of course, save and except where the gentlemen may prefer to leave the issue to pistol bullets."

He favoured me with further sensible advice, and imparted to me much exact information concerning our business; information, too, of a sort not to be acquired save upon the spot.

Indeed, in the short space of one fortnight, I came more accurately to comprehend Mr. Exon's transactions, and to estimate his precise position among the Bombay merchants, than I had ever hitherto done.

I appraised also, for the first time, at their right value, certain queries and notes made at Bombay on our portion of the correspondence. This became all the more apparent as he exhibited to me sheaves of letters in my own proper hand, and signed by Mr. Exon, containing certain little incongruities that could have only taken their rise in the latitude of Thames-street.

"When you return home," pursued Mr. Bacon, "your Indian experience ought to prove invaluable to the firm, as you will then be in a proper position completely to grasp the machinery of the business at both ends of the line."

* * * *

I lived temperately and applied myself with all due diligence to the mission entrusted to my hands.

I avoided cards and quarrel, though actually living in the midst of both. But, however it came about, I found myself one afternoon with a racking headache and shivering all over, as if in the depth of a London winter; and the factory physician (whom Mr. Bacon had called in without my knowledge), on feeling my pulse and asking a few general questions, gravely announced that I had the fever on me—and pretty severely.

I remember being put to bed and physicked, my hot fits and my cold fits, my tumblings and my tossings. Thereafter came a series of the strangest visions, in

which Captain Tadcaster, of the artillery, became somehow intermixed. Then, a lucid interval, with what Doctor Winthrop termed an "exhibition" of opium.

After this, visions of more than Oriental magnificence. Thereafter stupor and a dead blank.

* * * *

When first I recollect opening my eyes, I missed the already familiar furniture and fittings of the Factory.

Nor was Mr. Bacon any more to be seen; but the low-browed apartment in which I found myself was of the neatest and most comfortable that could be imagined. Through a half-open window I could discern both palm and carob trees, and a thick, fresh belt of greenery beyond.

.

The movements of Oriental servants are noiseless—like shadows they steal in, like shadows they depart—but I distinctly saw, at certain intervals, the cool outline of a white muslin turban and flowing tunic passing out through a low doorway into what I knew must be a garden. But even now I was never thoroughly awake, and I completely lacked the curiosity that under former circumstances had driven me to discover my present situation and the cause thereof.

My dreams had been of that wild and heterogeneous composition to be expected in the delirium attending a raging East Indian fever, and in a case where opiates had been administered with a liberal hand.

Now, under the grandly spreading lime tree in our garden at Warwick, with my sweet dead and gone mother and her ever favourite little Sylvia; then at the Cocoa-Tree, with brisk John Auldjo. Again, strolling through the docks of a Sunday with dear old Dick Holbrook and his beautiful sister, Mary.

I was again explaining to her (and aloud, too) the carven legend of Tethys and Oceanus on the space over the stern windows of the "Forte," when, fearful

lest she should fall over into the pool, I clutched at her suddenly.

.

This time I caught not at a shadow—'twas Mary herself—at least so it seemed) that bent over me, bidding me compose myself, as the doctor ordered me to be kept absolutely quiet. But, on raising myself weakly on one elbow and staring around me, I descried no one.

I fell back upon my pillow and slept again.

* * * *

The bungalow wherein I was quartered lay in a country part, but a few miles (northerly) from Bombay, and called Byculla. It was situate on the property of a kind-hearted gentleman named Robinson, a friend of "Our Mr. Bacon."

Hither I had been moved at Mr. Bacon's express instance, and here I lay awaiting that turn or crisis in my malady which was finally to decide my fate.

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The breeze was balm-laden, and the spicy, yet delicate odours of an Oriental garden, floated in at the half-open window.

I made out a large number of letters on a table just out of reach, nor was I long in discovering in this welcome sight the accumulation since my illness.

One that lay a-top (and askew) in a better light than the rest, I knew by the bold, steady, up and down legal hand to be from John Auldjo. The addresses by my other friends I could but guess at.

While pondering over this matter I dozed off again and dreamed that Sylvia kissed me on the forehead.

.

'Twas during the too brief, but beautiful Indian twilight that I awoke. Between myself and the window I beheld the seated figure of a lady, almost entirely in shadow, and perfectly still.

Soon there entered another lady, not so tall as the first, but of rounder, and (methought), of more charming proportions, besides being absolutely elegant in all her movements.

Between these two there ensued a few whispered words, whereupon the taller lady took occasion to withdraw.

My new guard (for this little scene, enacted before my half-closed eyes, simply amounted to a change of sentinels, such as I had been used to witness day after day in front of the Fort), busied herself in arranging matters here and there, as she paced up and down the apartment.

Having apparently managed all to her satisfaction, she drew in her chair against the head of my couch, and seated herself beside me.

As I turned my head on the pillow she perceived, for the first time, that I was awake, and asked me in a sweet, low voice, by no means unfamiliar (as I thought), how I found myself.

I replied that I had been dozing, but felt calm and easy in every way.

"May I venture so far as to enquire," said I, fixing my eyes on the dark and mysterious form of this guardian angel as seen immersed in the stippled twilight of the rapidly darkening chamber, "*may* I ask you, under whose hospitable roof I find myself, and to whom am I beholden for this unexampled, as well as unexpected, kindness?"

After some brief pause, the same sweet voice, which now seemed more familiar than ever, replied: "This is Mr. Robinson's Byculla bungalow. Mrs. Robinson, who has been sitting with you all the afternoon, has just left you; and, as she cares not to leave her charge to anyone but a person that she can exactly trust, I have taken her place for a time."

"But who, then, is this kind lady?"

"Ah!" replied the voice, "I am strictly enjoined not to allow you to talk over much."

"Is it bad for me, then, to speak?"

"Yes! So I am advised. Nevertheless, you can listen an you will."

"I will tell you all I may, just to compose your mind; and, then you *must* promise me to take the medicine I have to offer you; and address yourself to sleep."

I assented with a smile, and a slight movement of the head. In truth, I was so bewildered that I took it for one of my dreams.

She resumed:

"Mrs. Robinson is the wife of a cousin of Mr. Bacon, of the Factory, and it is Mr. Bacon himself that has brought you to us to recover. Here, the air is better. You are remote from the cares of business and the noises of Bombay, and when you are strong enough there is a beautiful garden here for your daily walks."

I began to take up the thread of my life again, and felt a lively sense of gratitude towards the good Bacon for a kindness at once so thoughtful and so practical.

As might have been expected, my curiosity became piqued in another direction, and I essayed to speak again.

"Only *once* more," murmured I, "and I promise you I won't talk again to-night if you will but tell me one thing more. You will forgive me if I enquire the name of the fair Samaritan to whom I am beholden for this cooling draught?"

"A question easily answered," said the gentle voice, as three shadowy fingers removed the cup and laid it on the table. "I am only Mrs. Robinson's sister."

"So," said I to myself, with a sigh, "and I take it wondrous kind of you, too. But, 'tis evident I am mistaken. I must have been dreaming again."

"Ah! you will soon be stronger now. To-night's sleep will make a vast difference in your condition. Try to sleep, I beseech you; 'tis the doctor's express injunction. Now, good-night!"

I raised my wasted arm, which lay outside the clothes, and she, perceiving the action, took the burning hand I offered in her own soft, cool palm. I had meant, gratefully, to press her hand; but, 'twas *she* that pressed mine.

Bidding me good-night yet again, she passed away out of the apartment with a footfall light as a fairy's.

"Mrs. Robinson's sister," I muttered to myself; thus breaking my promised silence directly I conceived her out of earshot. "That is nobody of my acquaintance, yet I could be sworn I knew both the voice and the hand. But this is Byculla, and I dreamed of England."

It must have been so, for whither would the soul sooner or swifter fly than to the beloved native land? *Here*, were as yet, no associations. *There*, was the temple of the heart, and thither the silly fluttering thing must needs wing its way to worship at the altar of the affections.

* * * *

I was back again in Thames-street, and the thoughts that I conceived there, I uttered in a dream in an Indian bungalow!

"My dear Mary!" cried I. "'Tis but right, 'tis but the due of an honest heart like thine to tell thee, I never truly loved thee. This ungracious speech has been wrung from me, and I must do what is right, both by Dick and by yourself. I can never possibly be yours."

* * * *

I was recovering from the effects of the opiate, and in a half conscious condition had been delivering my soul aloud when my heart almost stood still for a moment or two, at the sound of a heavy sigh, followed by a sob, coming from a dark corner of the room next the door. Thereafter I heard the dragging sound of a retiring foot that moved, but seemed reluctant to quit the floor.

It reminded me of the tragic stage, and the first tears I ever shed at Drury Lane.

.

Next day, in the forenoon, Mrs. Robinson sent by a native servant to say she would visit me presently, whereupon I summoned up my best looks so as not to disgrace the attention and kindly care she had lavished upon me.

To use a county phrase this lady was Dick Holbrook in petticoats. She was also Dick Holbrook in kindness of heart; but, strange as it may now appear, I did not open my mind to her as I have often since thought I might have done; speaking of her wondrous resemblance to my departed friend, and enquiring whether any possible bond of relationship existed between them.

From what cause Mrs. Robinson did not explain, but her sister was indisposed this morning, having passed a poor night.

I expressed my unfeigned regret and sorrow on hearing of this untoward circumstance, and begged my grateful duty to her; with the hope added, that she might soon find herself fully restored.

Then Mrs. Robinson, with some pithy remark touching the enervating effects of the Indian climate, turned the conversation.

CHAPTER XXXII.

MY RECOVERY AND A DUEL THAT FOLLOWED HARD THEREUPON.

Youth is full of resources, and, with a constitution naturally strong, recovery from most diseases is well assured, once the crisis is fairly past.

Yet have I known many a brave and promising young fellow slip through the doctor's fingers in my own day, and that in Bombay, too.

Providence sparing me, doubtless for better things, I weathered the point of death, and got safely into port to refit.

My bodily health became better day by day. I ate with gusto everything set before me, and oftentimes would send back my plate on the tray for more.

With all the kind treatment I had received, my convalescence, under the blessing of God, proceeded rapidly; in so much that, in the brief space of three weeks, I could walk about (with the aid of a stick), in the garden, where I fared well, though sparingly, on such sound and well ripened fruit as my nature then mostly craved.

The large and juicy mangoe I avoided as too coarse for my present stomach; but the luscious and yellow-jacketed banana hath been ever since then one of my chiefest dainties; though, in good sooth, 'tis a common enough fruit in these parts.

Nor in my various garden walks was I always solitary, for Mrs. Robinson (occasionally Mrs. Robinson with her sister); sometimes Mrs. Robinson's sister only; companioned me in these congenial and fragrant explorations.

Outside the garden the master (Mr. Robinson) would hale me along to view the stables and the great yard (his compound, as he phrased it), and get the

syce to bring out the flea-bitten Arab stallion for my inspection. Again, he would exhibit his strange and beautiful breeds of fowls, peacocks, turkeys, guinea-hens, and silver pheasants, or show me his peons and other servants, at their respective avocations, or solacing themselves with a friendly hookah or hubble-bubble, passed round after their frugal meal of rice and curry, relished with Bombay duck, a sort of dried fish about the bigness of a sprat, but somewhat thinner; after which I would amuse myself watching them as they washed and burnished their brazen utensils.

It was on one of those pleasant and tranquil evenings in the mangoe season, when Mary Holbrook (for I had better give the right name at once) and I were walking together by ourselves, that we turned off into a bye-path which led from the cocoanut avenue in the middle of the garden, down into the bed of a nullah or dried-up creek, whose banks now boasted a thick and heavy fringe of shrubbery, with paths cut through it in various directions and containing an arbour all builded up of bamboo joints, and quite hidden from view of the bungalow.

.

I am not writing a romance, nor yet coining a story, neither.

If I chance to amuse or to entertain, it is well; but here, I am simply essaying to state facts.

How hard it is to do this so that my descendants may understand my case, no one can judge so well as myself.

In brief I might record the day's doings thus:—

“Providence aiding me, Sylvia prevailed.”

But still I am fain to go somewhat into detail, which I should not do were these papers designed for the public eye.

Sylvia (as I just put it) had prevailed; that is to say, my loyalty never blenched; but, nevertheless, I felt so full of misery that night, that, avoiding all society, I denied myself to my friends, and shut myself up in my own room.

The tears, the protestations, the arguments, that Mary had used, all came back to me with tenfold force sitting there (as I was) solitary and tearful in the twilight.

One point that she had made gave me exquisite pain, besides placing me at no small disadvantage. She had alleged (I *must* confess it if I would be understood aright) that I had been mistaken in Sylvia.

"Consider," said she, "how many thousands of miles of blue ocean roll between you two now! What climes, what continents, what nations intervene! And here, a wild coffee-house companion (the Mr. John Auldjo you spoke about) sends you four entire sheets of bank post, full of the kindest messages and gossip.

"Then poor Dick's crony, Mr. Harry Redmayne, sends you another three sheets; the great Mr. Daniel Defoe a huge, thick letter, and so on. Yet you have not (by your own showing), one single scratch of a pen to justify Sylvia's memory of you!

"That I nursed you in your desperate extremity—I make naught of *that*, for Arabella hath done the like and made no sign—but that *I* (despised and flung a one side as I am) should remember you, when Sylvia ignores your very existence. Does *this* seem to you a mean thing?

"Oh! 'tis hard, Mr. Rous, to find you so strange, so stern, so cold. Don't force me to give it words. So ungrateful!"

* * * *

With these words she made as though she would leave the arbour; when I, overcome by this latter charge, flung myself at her feet, taking Heaven to witness, that never was man that desired to be truer, more grateful, nay! more devoted, than myself. I reminded her that I owed her life and more, and besought her to believe me ever her nighest and her dearest friend.

Rising from the floor of the arbour, I caught her by the hand nearest me, and pressed it dutifully to my lips.

"Come, sir!" cried she. "I am unused to these displays. Who am *I* that, queen-fashion, *I* should give a hand to kiss? The friend that was your true friend, first in England, then in the East, should stand (me-thinks) on a tenderer footing now!"

When, all at once, as if giddy and losing her balance, she had fallen to the ground had I not caught her in my arms.

Observing her altered and gentler aspect, great tears standing in her eyes, one foot nervously tapping on the floor, and one white arm hanging helpless by her side, I seemed to lose sense of everything save the ingratitude she had so warmly charged me withal; and therefore resolved in all my best to make such atonement as I might, for my seeming cruelty and harshness.

Her cheek lay temptingly near to my own, resting against my shoulder. My arm held her firmly and supportingly about her slender waist. Indeed, I had been more than man and little less than a demigod had I resisted the temptation to heal all her wounds, and seal our reconciliation with a kiss.

Nor did she resist; but, with her sighs of relief, the sunshine of hope and of happiness returned to those rare eyes; the roses to her cheeks; and she looked, to me, like one rapt in some delicious reverie.

* * * *

My brain was in one mad whirl. I attempted to explain that I was not (*malgré* all this natural display) one whit disloyal to Sylvia; but, so rapt was she, in what seemed her present joy, that she heard not a word, but continued to regard me with unutterable calm and contentment, from the pillow that she had chosen to make of my shoulder.

* * * *

At this moment there was some stir among the polished and rustling young bamboo shoots that interlaced themselves across the entrance to the harbour, as a figure in a white turban brushed the crisped leaves lightly aside in passing.

The foregoing affair wrought in me greater disquietude than it is possible for me here to express.

While I strove on the one hand (and strive I did) to be perfectly kind and sympathizing, *but no more*; Mary, on the other hand, continued to follow me with her eyes, watching my every movement, sighing sometimes and smiling through her tears.

All of these signs Mrs. Robinson was not slow to note and appraise at their proper value; but, as for myself, beyond being an object of suspicion to the one, and of misplaced affection with the other, I was in trouble from further causes, as I speedily had reason to know.

.

Captain Tadcaster, who was by no means scrupulous about quoting names as he detailed some of his piquant morsels of gossip, had been busy with that of Mary Holbrook as connected with my own, and had openly told the young fellows at the fort mess how one of his peons had *distinctly seen me with Mary in my arms in the arbour in the Byculla garden*.

Apart entirely from any personal damage I had sustained through the highly coloured narration that Captain Tadcaster had stooped to listen to from a low-caste serving man, and its thereafter circulation by him, my blood was all aflame on Miss Holbrook's account; so, disregarding the earlier advice of our Mr. Bacon, I sent a young civilian of my acquaintance (Mr. Charles Barnes) with a hostile message to the Fort.

Mr. Robinson I visited privately in his own apartment, telling him exactly and without reserve all that had occurred between his sister-in-law and myself; what had been our previous relations and acquaintance, and where, etc. I assured him also that I had not presumed to take up the quarrel of a member of his family, had my own name not been *equally* concerned, and congratulated him in advance on the honourable satisfaction I should be sure to obtain, albeit at the proper peril of my life; adding too, that as Mrs. Robinson, as well as Miss Holbrook, had endeared herself to me by constant acts of kindness, I felt a certain

happiness in being able to go out in person, thus preventing her husband's life from being imperilled.

"Captain Tadcaster," said Mr. Robinson, dryly, "is a disappointed suitor of Miss Holbrook. *'Voilà tout!'*"

Mr. Robinson, a thoroughly sensible man, who had seen the world for himself ere he had settled down and married the elder Miss Holbrook, answered me with a grave expression of countenance, and begged of me as a favour (personal to himself) to get me back to the Factory so soon as this fighting business should be settled and over.

"Not," said he, "my dear Mr. Rous, that I in any way mistrust your motives, which are in themselves (to my mind) admirable and just; but because your protracted stay with us at Byculla will only serve to embarrass myself; and further, to unsettle Mary."

To all this I agreed on the instant, but told him, as I grasped his hand in the warmest friendship, that I felt proud to have the family honour to defend that week, and defend it I would, at the expense of my life, if need be.

"Bravely said, Mr. Rous!" cries he. "But should you fall, you will make two tender-hearted young creatures as good as widows! *Now*, to-day had I gone out, I had but one to leave behind me."

* * * *

Dear descendant of mine, whosoever thou art; hast ever been *out*?

If not, my son, *go not!* 'Tis the silliest, the absurd-est, the most murderous of all the follies extant!

To-day I would I had chastised Captain Tadcaster either with a good whanghee cane or with a Penang lawyer at the most. But, though I did go out that day at gray dawn, prepared to defend both Mary's honour and my own, I had no intention (more than *you* might have) of drilling a hole in my adversary; and I would to God, now, I never had.

* * * *

Captain Tadcaster had been drinking over night, and mistrusted his sword arm.

So he begged of me, in a sufficiently polite note, delivered by his second (an officer of the native levies) to be permitted, as the challenged party, the use of pistols; supposing always, that those weapons should prove agreeable to my fancy.

The time being brief, I at once assented.

My last will and testament was made. Sylvia's dear little agate heart was about my neck, and I had barely risen from my knees, where I had been vainly essaying to say my prayers, when my second entered.

* * * *

'Tis all over, past now, and I feel truly thankful to know that my late antagonist (though desperately wounded) is not despaired of altogether by the surgeons.

.

The ground being duly measured off, and everything arranged, three shots were exchanged between us, Captain Tadcaster doing his best to give me my quietus, which, had his hand been steadier, he had infallibly done.

For my own part, I had no desire beyond the satisfaction of honour. I therefore fired entirely wide of him the first shot. But, his bullet passing through the flap of my hat, I decided to act on the defensive. My second shot, put in a little closer, grazed his arm; but his, intended doubtless for my heart, owing to his unsteady aim, was diverted upwards, and passed likewise through my hat. At the third and (as it proved) the final discharge, he made a great effort to cover me properly, which I, perceiving, and being further determined to sell my life dearly, imitated—alas! only too well.

His ball took instant effect in my left arm, just above the elbow joint; and mine, being a fair body hit, brought him tumbling, face forward, on the turf.

Our seconds rushed in; and the surgeons, immediately raising Captain Tadcaster, opened the breast of his coat. He was declared to be shot through the lungs. Like myself, he was bleeding profusely, but considerably more than I.

The Factory surgeon, who had accompanied me on to the ground, clapped a tourniquet on my arm, which done, I instantly addressed myself to the condition of my late antagonist; but found that, though weak and faint from loss of blood, he still cherished a malicious feeling towards myself, which he was at no pains to conceal.

"I am sorry, Captain Tadcaster," said I, "that a stern necessity has compelled me to fire upon you with such deplorable effect. Had you adhered more to the strict laws of the duello, and abstained from taking a deadly aim, I had fired my last two rounds in the air; but you put me to it, sir, and here we are now in this plight. . . . I trust you may survive to be a wiser and a better-guided man."

But, suffering as he was, he regarded me with a defiant air, and muttered something in broken words, which my second and I took to signify that he hoped to live to have me out yet again and shoot me *dead*.

The surgeons here interposed, and enjoined perfect silence.

After which a carriage that had been posted hard by, under a mangoe tope on our left, was motioned up, and my enemy, together with the military surgeon, was driven slowly back to the fort.

.

Not caring to involve Mr. Robinson in any possible unpleasant consequences that might prove the outcome of my duel, I mounted a pony provided for me, and with my wounded arm in a sling, rode along with my second to the Factory.

.

After suffering an agony of considerable acuteness, what from probe, what from bistoury, the ball (slightly flattened) was got out.

This ball, and my old three-cornered hat, punched through in two places, I preserve to this day, as vouchers of the fight.

Contrary to the expectation of some, all Bombay was with me on the issue of the duel.

Fathers and mothers alike congratulated me.

The Factory gentlemen, who could ill brook the fine scorn of the captain, rejoiced undisguisedly, while the officers at the Fort were not ill-pleased at the punishment which had overtaken their mess mate, and which, as they were fain to consider, was richly deserved.

Mr. Bacon, though conscientiously opposed to duelling per se, saw no other possible course open to me, especially in a community so small, so isolated as our own, and where strict example was a matter of necessity.

Mr. Robinson called in person at the Factory, and thanked me with much cordiality.

.

I had many further visitors but, besides all this, there reached me very shortly after the event a letter from Mary Holbrook.

This epistle I shrink from quoting at length.

I have here all the secret of her heart, and see, by her grace and favour, into the hidden depths of a most beautiful, albeit, wilful and impulsive nature.

A few lines may suffice; what is left out I have indicated, after the bookman's wont, with small points.

BYCULLA,
NEAR BOMBAY,
JUNE 17.

Best and most generous of men . . . you have rid me of a hated persecutor. . . . You have ventured your own life in the vindication of my honour, dear to me, as to all of mine; I now offer you the sacrifice of my heart. For your sake . . . I remain, a maid for ever. . . . May you be happy with your Sylvia, and live to discover, in the *unbroken silence of the future*, the eloquence of my pure and undying affection, too big indeed for words. . . . Nay! further, I would bid you forget me, could I flatter myself that

that were possible; though the living and regretful memory of yourself, can end but with the latest breath of her who now subscribes herself,

Your affectionate friend,

MARY HOLBROOK.

P.S.—.

.

—M.H.

The postscript (often held to be the staple of a woman's letter) I entirely withhold, but in order to allay any curiosity on the part of my descendant-reader (should such arise), I may mention here that the postscript, never designed by Mary to neutralize the effect of the foregoing lines, served rather (if anything) to add to their power, and concluded by confiding me to the All-wise and All-seeing God, in words so tender, so full of sorrow, and so maidenly withal, that it may be safely left to the imagination.

O, si sic omnes!

—J.R.

* * * *

These few simple and sincere words, wrung from her by force of circumstances, and dictated by the purest and most honourable sentiments possible, affected me inexpressibly.

.

Will any of my descendants forbear a smile if I here record an idea that presented itself to my mind?

Supposing (which, may Heaven forbid) that my beloved Sylvia were to be taken from me, and myself once more alone in the wide world, would I not, in that case, be bound in all honour, as well as by all the ties of a most noble and disinterested affection, to

devote the remainder of my days to Mary, as the sole possible partner of my joys and sorrows?

.

I record the idea just as it occurred, unconscious of the slightest shade of disloyalty therein.

But I am keenly alive to the fact that the open expression of this feeling, however honest, might lay me open to a criticism as scathing as it would be undeserved.

The position is a peculiar one altogether.

* * * *

Captain Tadcaster had a long and tedious recovery. I doubt, indeed, whether he ever entirely *did* recover. But, as soon as he was able to move about, and take exercise again, he made all due preparations, and, by the pronounced advice of his physician, resigned his commission, in order to benefit by a residence in the milder climate of Italy.

.

I must confess that, while I thanked God for having preserved me by His good Providence from the crime of blood guiltiness (for I had never seriously meditated the killing of Tadcaster), I had still my moments of remorse. Indeed, I could not avoid at times picturing to myself a life entirely wrecked through my instrumentality.

Had Tadcaster not provoked me to this duel (and I am credibly informed he then stood well for promotion, he had ere this achieved his majority; but now, he retires a simple captain—and a broken man.

I bear no malice, but I do regret that such direful circumstances should have compelled me (though in the cause of honour), thus to enact the part of a Nemesis towards him.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

WHEREIN I BID ADIEU TO THE GORGEOUS EAST.

The breeze is brisk and favourable; we hold our top gallants well aboard, and three of our merry sea boys, each with a leg across a yard, busies himself in shaking out a royal.

Astern of us, as far as the eye can reach, stretches a long blue-gray panorama—round-headed knolls, and ragged outlined islets set in a belt of dreamy foam.

One by one these melt, and merge into each other, till all is lost.

Even this fantastic picture had been unseen by us, but for the hazy effect of the morning atmosphere, upheaving everything that lay beneath the ever-retreating horizon.

By such favour as we do view it, 'tis the last glimpse of India some of us (at least) are ever likely to see.

Then, as I become conscious of being once more encircled by blue, sky-canopied ocean, I feel strangely alone, and though every forward bound of the brave ship brings me nearer and nearer to my beloved Sylvia, I cannot but regard the dim and distant eastern horizon that closes over Mary Holbrook in her Indian home without emotion—a heavy and indefinable emotion that is like to give me the heartache.

The part I had been called upon to play in India I had now before me in full review with my illness, and the angel that watched over me. My regrettable but necessary cruelty to Mary—the duel by which I had won her gratitude and respect, and now, the self-sacrifice that my action had imposed upon her, filled me with the saddest retrospection that I have known.

.

I find, on overhauling my “log,” many matters of interest, not less to the true lover of the sea and wor-

shipper of nature, than to the poet of the ages, and the cunning limner of seas and skies.

.

But I find I have already enough said for the strict purpose of my family volume in my account of the outward voyage, I am therefore fain to content myself with relating how that, after a lengthy passage of six months and a half during which we saw every variety of weather, we came, to our inexpressible joy, under the guidance of Divine Providence, to an anchor in the Downs on the afternoon of May Day, 17..*

.

Two days later, I present myself to Mr. Exon at the old counting-house in Thames-street, where my good master, after embracing me, as though I had been his son, detained me in conversation upon Indian affairs for the better part of the afternoon.

I leave Mr. Exon's room after being specially invited to dine with him on the morrow along with Mr. Barnaby, and in passing out into the office, visit my old comrades, who testify their joy at meeting me once more in a manner that is gratifying and pleasing beyond description.

.

Mrs. Counsell's modest establishment, that now looks so dark and dingy after my late luxurious apartments at the Factory and Mr. Robinson's Byculla bungalow, is all agog on my arrival.

I am complimented on my bronzed complexion and travelled air.

Mrs. Counsell shakes me by both hands, and makes a fool of herself in crying over me; while the faithful Molly, who has grown to be part and parcel of the household, comes in with a double curtsy, holding out her white apron as if in act to dance! I kiss the inno-

*Here the ink was so faded that the last two figures of the date could not be ascertained.—S.R.

cent little soul on one cheek in a manner that causes her the liveliest confusion, while Mrs. Counsell rallies me reprovngly on my foreign manners, and expresses herself as perfectly shocked at my freedom.

I hear a well-known, but somewhat faltering foot-fall on the stair, and in another moment I am in the arms of dear old Barnaby, who hangs upon my neck.

CHAPTER XXXIII (continued).

IN WHICH MR. EXON DILATES UPON THE MONSOONS,
AND MR. BARNABY POINTS THE MORAL OF MY (SO
FAR) CAREER.

A remarkably pleasant little dinner party, neither too free nor yet too ceremonious.

Thereafter wine and much solid talk on Indian affairs.

I explain some of the little incongruities pointed out by our Mr. Bacon, and show how impossible it is to be seised of everything in correspondence from a distance.

We drifted into conversation on the monsoons, and the advantages to be availed of from these periodical gales, the average length of the passage out to India and back, the best time to load certain goods so as to arrive in proper season, etc., and I was surprised to observe that Mr. Exon, who had never doubled the Cape in his days (though well acquainted with the North Sea and the Baltic) had formed juster and sounder theories as touching the monsoons than had I myself, who had been out in them.

.

Walking home to the old lodging, arm in arm with Mr. Barnaby, that gentleman took occasion to whisper me in the ear, that Mr. Exon was so well satisfied with the success of my mission, and the value of the experience I had made while in India, as to be now meditating the offer to me of a junior partnership.

.

"He will open the subject to you probably to-morrow," quoth my Mentor, ex cathedra (to wit, from his great armed chair) in his own private apartment.

"Your fortune, my son," said is, "is now made, and you have no further cause to regret the Queen's Navy.

"See!" continued he, "the finger of Providence in your whole career, your distaste for the builder's trade, bringing you to London; your dear mother's illness taking you back to Warwick, whereby you escape being blown up in Her Majesty's ship, the 'Devonshire'; the brewer's wain that broke your leg for you, broke it for your benefit; for, out of that seeming evil, came your abandonment of the naval service (a great grief to you I am bound to admit), but not an unmixed evil, for it enabled me to place you with my dear old school-mate, Joe Exon, one of our first merchants in the India trade; and, indeed, John Rous, you have had your own fair share of voyaging since, and, mightily to your own nautical taste, I'll warrant, was that portion of the proceedings.

"Had you proved unruly, wilful, stubborn, and void of natural affection, you had infallibly been blown up with the rest in the 'Devonshire,' but you have bowed to the will of the Almighty, acting as a good son should, and it has turned out, as I always felt certain it would, that a blessing has rested upon you.

"I felt tolerably sure of you till Captain Woodes-Rogers offered to make you his secretary; but, when you came to my bedside that morning to tell me you had conquered your inclinations and that His Excellency the Governor of the Bahamas must needs find another gilded gentleman to write his despatches and receive deputations, then I felt absolutely certain that I had not formed a false estimate of your character.

"You have been to some extent my private pupil, and I feel it now my duty to tell you, and with a pardonable pride in saying so, that I am more than satisfied with you."

.

"My dear sir," cried I, interrupting him in his oration, "I trust I never shall disgrace you!"

"And that," replied he, "I am convinced, you never will. Suppose we take a turn down the street this fine night and turn in to Will's' for half an hour, and smoke a solemn pipe over it?"

'Twas a singular circumstance, as it struck me, and I was filled with emotion as I read in the "Evening Courant" in our box, a report that Captain Woodes-Rogers had been superseded in his Government of the Bahamas, and was ordered home. I handed the paper to Mr. Barnaby, who moralized further on that event, and on laying down the journal and calling for our reckoning, he quoted to me (somewhat sententiously perhaps, but with all the air of a man whose better judgment had been confirmed), "Put not your confidence in princes!"

I sighed, for I was grieved to the heart for Governor Woodes-Rogers, and added warmly that he was an honest man and a brave officer into the bargain.

"Two exact reasons," said Mr. Barnaby (as he took a big pinch of rappee), why he should make an unacceptable Governor."

"Indeed, I think none the worse of your captain," cried he, "but 'tis a thousand pities he had not been a British merchant instead!"

CHAPTER XXXIII. (continued).

TIME'S CHANGES.

I meet Harry Redmayne in Covent Garden, and take him to Button's, where we talk over old times and old friends.

I learn much about John Auldjo and his misfortunes, for things have not gone well with dear old John since his last letter to me. Harry himself is sedater, and to some extent altered, though I find myself at a loss to account for the same; but, on my volunteering to come and pay him a visit (on a night to be named), in company with John Auldjo and one or two other choice spirits, there was a visible embarrassment in his manner.

Before I parted from him, I said something further on the subject, adding that we could all go to the play thereafter in a body, and make a night of it. Whereupon Harry, with an air of awkwardness which truly sat ill upon him, begged for the present to be excused from naming a day. "We shall meet again soon, in all probability," said he, "and then we can arrange matters further. Meanwhile farewell."

Shortly after parting with Harry, who had lost all his former grace and sprightliness, and become stiff, constrained, and almost timid, I espied John Auldjo at the first crossing in Russell-street, bestowing an obolus on a wooden-legged tar, who had just finished flourishing his broom on the road with no small show of diligence and expertness. Though it was nigh midday, I could not forbear from running into John's arms on the spot, and from my old "*Pius Æneas*" I received such a welcome as more than made full amends for the stiff restraint and distant airs of Harry.

Now John, to be exact, once the pink of perfection in the matter of wearing apparel, presented all the appearance of a battered beau.

He was neither ragged nor travel-stained, nor buttonless, but his old three-corner looked rusty, his coat crumpled, as though he had slept in it, and his shoes, though fairly good, were coarse and muddy looking.

His sharp and cleverly cut features were of a pasty complexion, his nose pinched, and his keen eyes generally suffused.

I was too good a judge of John's disposition to make any remark, and, as Harry and I had made our debauch on nothing more potent than coffee, I rejoiced at being able to hale John after me into Button's to revive his drooping spirits with a glass of Sherris sack, or Madeira; but, ere I had put my intention into words, he proposed of his own part, that we should "adjourn to some other place where we might discourse more privately over a lily-white clay and a pot of beer."

"You have taken the wind out of my sails, Jack!" cried I, "I was about to heave you a line and tow your venerable hulk into Button's!

"Avast there!" exclaims Jack, "John Auldjo can lead the way to a modester tavern where the liquor is both good and cheaper.

"None of your choice old chalky-gout vintages, but good, sound honest October. Quantity, Nick. Quantity is what my soul loveth. Quality for beaux and macaronis! Satiety for 'yours truly'!

"John's purse is not so well ballasted with crown pieces as of old; and he cuts his coat (perforce) according to his cloth; for, when one cannot stand the full suit of sail, one has to stagger along under storm-canvas before the pitiless blast; and an ancient of smaller size must needs suffice, where the grand old holiday flag is in risk of being blown to tatters."

So saying, and cocking his old hat over one eye with a rakish air, he led the way, whistling as he went, to a tavern styled "The Rummer," in a bye-lane, off Russell-street, whereinto we soon entered and bespoke the use of a private room.

'Twas truly a modest place, thoroughly retired from the busy world; but the October seemed mighty thin, to my fancy.

Unused for a long season to malt liquor, I could

not but regard John with surprise as he emptied and replenished his tankard; and, fond as I was, by this time, of the weed, I found the atmosphere of the small apartment rapidly approaching to the consistence of a blue cloud.

John waxed jovial, his face expanded, the colour returned to his cheek, the fire of a former enthusiasm was rekindled in his eye. Also his tongue was fairly loosed, and I never heard John talk so well neither before nor since. Genial, jovial, and satiric all by turns, as he reminded me of certain strange and mutual events in our buried past.

A stave of naval song, carolled in a voice that had done small discredit to a cherub, carried me back on the wings of memory to John's glorious lodging in the Strand, with the curious chart of the Auldjo country and the library bestowed on him, volume by volume, by the naval heroes of the age.

.

"The Library, Nick! is with the 'Longobardi,' the same fellows great Cæsar had such trouble with; as for the Auldjo country, though severely mortgaged, it still holds a proud position on the Scottish land-roll."

.

"For myself, I live 'hand to mouth' (as the saying goes) sometimes it is the Right Honourable Joe Addison, sometimes 'tis Captain Sir Richard Steele that wants a neat précis of this, or that, or a chance article for one of the prints they most favour. They are not bad paymasters neither. Captain Steele pays when he can, and as he may; but I always feel that the Countess of Warwick has smiled every time I sack the Right Honourable Joseph's guineas."

"Then it is not always sunshine at home with Mr. Spectator?" I interject, inquiringly.

"By no means," says John, musingly, and with his hawk's nose deep in the tankard.

"Between you and me and the wall, no; and then Mr. Spectator will withdraw his custom and his friendly

circle from Button's, and even forget the guineas he may happen to have stowed away in his desk for 'yours truly' to command."

"But withdraw his custom and his friends from Button's! Methinks this is a more singular item than forgetting an engagement."

"Marry! 'tis in this wise," replied John, taking the long clay from his lips, and screwing a column of tobacco smoke up into the air with an effect that was mighty pretty to behold, "'tis in this wise—

"Button was once a body servant in the Earl of Warwick's family, hence you smoke the patronage of Button's coffee-house.

"The Countess (say) is in the pouts; the Right Honourable Joe having failed to please, or neglected or forgotten to obtain a certain favour for some needy hanger-on, and hey, presto! Mr. Spectator withdraws his ambassador from the Court of King Button, and chews the cud of sweet and bitter fancy—alone."

"Ah! these wives!!!"

"But there are wives *and* wives," exclaim I, flying to the rescue in the future interests of Sylvia.

"So!" rejoins John. "I don't attempt the denial. Take, for example, our old friend, Harry Redmayne. Did'st ever meet a grave-digger with a more kill-joy cast of countenance? So prim, so marvellous proper, no time to be civil to a friend, and as fearful of his club as though the basement were mined with gun-powder!"

"Out upon it all! Fie upon it!" say I, "sooner than marry in these latter days of this crazy old world, I had sooner go hang!"

"But, tell me," quoth I (for I retained no small interest in Harry), "hath he made a bad marriage, and is he fearful lest it should become public talk?"

"Not a bit, not a whit. Mrs. Redmayne is a miracle of propriety. She is *improving* Harry, whereby, pray, understand that she puts him to his purgation for the past offences, of his batchelorhood (Ah! what days were those, Nick!), in a species of moral pillory.

"We are all proscribed, *myself entirely so*; and he

is advised day by day that whoso toucheth pitch must needs thereby be defiled!

And when, Nick, dost take the grand leap in the dark thyself? But e'en to make the most of thee, whilst thou'rt still the old man, and hast any real camaraderie left, what say'st thou to another tankard?"

"Another day, another tankard, John, is my reply; but, as for the leap in the dark (as it pleases thee to make it), nought is settled yet. In short, I know not whether I go to Warwick or Sylvia comes to London."

"Ah!" cries John, "out upon thee for a knave! Hie thee to Warwick! thence never to return; but suffer me to look the last in London on the man whose affection for his friend will be one day entirely swallowed up in his love for his wife."

"I protest, my dear John," exclaimed I.

"Nay! no protestations," quoth he. *I* would be no party to making thee bewray thyself; but let me tell thee that ere so many months be over thou wilt be bid shut the door in my face!"

"Never, John!" cried I. This is too unjust."

"Well! Well! as thou wilt," he exclaimed in happier mood. "I love thee well. Thou art mine own, for, have not I made thy fortune?"

"Suffer me, for the sake of old times, to take my leave while as yet thou art in this excellent frame of mind, wherein thou art worth to me (as to the world at large), a whole score of Harry Redmaynes brayed together in a mortar!"

.

A short absence of three years, and what changes through deaths, marriages and removals! London seemed to wear a different face; but, go where I would, *there* was honest, spendthrift, devil-may-care old John Auldjo, ever the same.

.

'Tis now but a week since John Auldjo spoke of the great Mr. Addison.

To-day all London is in mourning for his sake; shops put up their shutters. The Wits, the Kit-cat Club, the Grecian, Button's, and the Cocoa Tree are closed, so the Jerusalem and many others. The city pulpits are hung in black, and Captain Sir Richard Steele wears a crape about his sword-knot.

.

Soon it will be, not only all London, but all Britain and Ireland, and the Indies East and West, and where-soever the English tongue is heard, wheresoever Cato is known and the "Spectator" approved.

Who shall dare supply his place in politics, or who shall venture to name his successor in the republic of letters? Who shall contrive his epitaph? or who *presume* to write his eulogy? Certain not I!

.

Mr. Addison is to be buried in the Abbey.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

WHEREIN MY WEDDING-DAY IS FIXED.

Sad to relate I have just lost the most excellent of fathers, and of men.

.

On his late visit to London to welcome me on my return from India, he had not only done me more than justice, but had given me ample proofs of his affection and loving kindness as well. He told me he had long since repented him of his hardness he had shown me in my early youth: that he read the soul of my beloved mother in my eyes, and noted divers subtle likenesses to her, what in my attitudes, what in my ways. Then, in a manner totally different from his earlier one, he would descant on my illustrious maternal grandsire, who had performed such prodigies of valour under Blake. "The Queen's Navy," he added, "hath lost a brave seaman in thee; but, the old blood will one day out, and children or grandchildren of thine may yet come into the world to assert at sea their birthright in the noble deeds of thy mother's father."

.

He counselled me likewise not to delay my marriage any longer than might be necessary.

.

I have here to remark that from this point onwards my little volume is like to assume a somewhat different aspect.

A more fragmentary production possibly: for as in the past I have been at some pains to present my life in detail; so in future it shall be my care to supply

brief notes of events in order as they occur from my great brazen-clasped diary that I still continue to keep. However, it shall be my study to connect my fragments as smoothly as may be, in order that the current of the story may flow along pleasantly under the eye of the reader.

.

Writing, whether for the amusement or edification of others is no easy task. He who undertakes the like, is but too apt to fancy that the reader will see matters exactly through *his* spectacles, and so, follow his drift with all the greater exactness.

Again, he may imagine that he has set down certain little circumstances which albeit big with the subject, himself has omitted to record, and as books, like lives, are made up of little things, it may not prove impossible that he has left out the very trivialities that gave the key or the colour of the passage.

Wherefore, my sketches, I fear me, are like to turn out but mere indications of what I intended they should be, but if approved as sufficiently suggestive, I shall regard my end as having been tolerably well attained.

Again, as no two persons are supposed always to receive exactly the same impressions from the perusal of the same sentence, I fear I must despair of any of my descendants seeing the exact scenes I would set before them.

I am moved to make this remark as I remember a favourite exercise of a certain officer who was Fort-major at Bombay in my time. This gallant gentleman (who himself was no mean artist) held the same view that I have just set forth, and to prove his case he would at times in the evenings, read a single sentence aloud from a book, asking his brother officers to render the same in pencil or on pen and ink, as a picture or design; and each man according to his own particular impression or idea.

I myself have been present on certain of these evening at the Fort, taking my own share in the exercise or sport, and never yet did I find any two to agree in the manner of their delineation. They were *all*

right; but, possibly no single individual among them, saw the subject exactly as did the author of the book that they sought to interpret by means of pictures—or indeed as any of his own comrades.

That I have failed in many instances to describe the personal features, colours (be it of eyes and hair), exact stature, costume, etc., is much to be laid to the fact, that I was so “saturate with my theme” as to fancy I had completely described everything already. This my readers will, I trust, be ready to pardon, and I give due credit to their imaginations for taking in all my little hinted effects, and composing for themselves therefrom the perfect picture I had always originally intended.

This is partly explanation, partly apology, but me-fears it runs a chance of appearing a sermon!

.

To return; the day is fixed for the third of next month, and that will afford me better than a fortnight for my preparations.

An unforeseen difficulty has arisen.

Sylvia (very naturally) desires that our wedding shall take place at Warwick, where her own people are, and in the same church she has ever been wont to attend. Her own family also incline to this idea.

My own first thought had been for Sylvia to come up to London.

I hoped in such case, to have had it in my power to get my venerable friend and benefactor, Mr. Barnaby, to give the bride away; also to secure the presence of Captain Woodes-Rogers, then in town; also that of my ingenious preceptor, Mr. Daniel Defoe, both of which distinguished gentlemen I am proud to rank amongst the truest of my friends.

.

The ever-green and always light-hearted John Auldjo (who after his fall has lighted on his feet like a cat) is now in a snug appointment at the Admiralty, and resplendent again in a new suit of blue laced with gold, and silver shoe-buckles.

Had I only my own inclination to consider, John had been my groomsman. Old acquaintance and good-fellowship would seem to demand as much; but I have my own fears lest John's errant and truant disposition, not to say reputation, be not too far blown abroad by this time. Item, I have my own particular dread of the tongue of Mrs. Harry Redmayne, who not only *never* forgives an indiscretion; but, taking a man's reputation *as it was*, continually publishes the same in the present tense, saying, "Behold him *as he is!*"

With her there is no repentance for the prodigal—"As the tree falls; so it lies." It is enough, he is ex-communicate; and therefore without the pale.

.

I am relieved from my dilemma; and, adopting Sylvia's original idea, I take coach for Warwick.

Mr. Barnaby is all too old to undertake the journey. It is impossible also at present that either Captain Woodes-Rogers or Mr. Defoe can leave the capital; so, neither dear old John Auldjo, nor Harry Redmayne, need take any offence.

.

It is all arranged: Happy soul that I am! St. Mary's, Warwick, on Wednesday next, and Sylvia's brother, Ned, is to hold my glove and fee the parson and clerk as most suitable.

CHAPTER XXXV.

I AM MARRIED AT LAST.

'Tis strange to note how absence from home, a reputation for having travelled, and the acquisition besides of a certain air of self-possession, raise up friends to a man. When first I left Warwick, they looked upon me as a sort of hare-brained boy, fond of hot water, and all too anxious to make himself food for powder.

On my return from London, however, when my dear mother lay sick, people thought me a soft-hearted young chap and a well-natured, albeit too tender for a man o' war!

But now (look you!) in a laced hat with loop and button, a grand new suit of blue with gold galloon and a sword complete, item a wedding-favour stuck mighty prettily in the lapel of my coat, I became, without knowing it, in some sort, a centre of admiration!

Such of the shame-faced and bashful-looking young men as I had left behind me mere boys; now advanced shyly, and eyed me askance, as if craving recognition; when each one on receiving the same and a hearty shake of the hand or mayhap a playful poke between the ribs from my cane, straightway would run off joyous and laughing to rejoin his companions, entirely a new being and full of strange importance thereupon.

Now, if my touch, so transformed these young clods of the valley, was I not *myself* first transformed by contact with the great world, the soldiers, the sailors, the men of letters, the merchants, the courtiers and fashionables, not to name certain of the nobility of Hindustan to whom I had been presented?

But, in a midland, far away county town like Warwick, for a young man (one of themselves, too!) who had been to the Indies and back, to come and marry

a pretty little Warwickshire lass, and an old sweetheart to boot. This, indeed, was no small thing!

They rejoiced over me accordingly with much shouting, full of honest heartiness. Then, the older people such as had known my dear father and mother, and their history and connections, come forward to do me honour. I felt as young as ever; but, it put me out most strangely, this coming to be on equal terms with those whom I had been hitherto taught to approach hat in hand, and with (as most due) all proper respect. Continuing that respect, I came to touch, as 'twere, the secret of eternal youth; for, had I accepted of a sudden, the position of equality that my riper years and bettered circumstances had procured me, I had straightway become as one of themselves.

In future years I shall be happy when further duties and increasing cares come to weigh upon me, to make myself more at one with the old.

Then, shall I march up boldly to their relief, like a battalion of the reserve, when the main body far spent with the fight and showing great gaping rifts in the ranks, waits my arrival. Till then, it is, "Sir, your most obedient," or "Madam, your most humble and devoted servant," and so forth, as most fit.

Ere I enlist my pen in the service of the record of Hymen; before I describe what the lovesick poet treats of under figures of cupids, torches, censers, and long leading reins of roses, I must essay to use it with all the regret begotten of the most deep as well as the loyallest sorrow.

.

Let the record be as brief as 'tis most sad.

Our good Queen Anne, to the inexpressible grief of the nation and sorrow of the whole civilised world, died on the first day of August, A.D. 1714. She had lived nearly half a century and reigned during thirteen years that covered England with great glory, insomuch that no sovereign of ours in so brief a space had ever witnessed from the Throne such a succession of stirring and glorious events by sea and on land.

I look back now on those thirteen years. I came to London but a boy, and then, she had been six years crowned. To-day I am a man and on the very brink of marriage, and while I mourn the national loss, I feel proud to think that I lived the braver and more stirring years of my life under the good Queen Anne.

.

They have taken us (just as we best loved they should) for a young couple; and the hearty support and kindly affection we received from all quarters hath fairly charmed us.

From gate to porch, from aisle to chancel, our path lay over scattered roses the whole way.

The young maidens of the neighbourhood, were up betimes (as I learned) this beautiful and heavenly morning, to cull thereof the choicest to strew before us.

Not the least pretty or affecting sight was the lane formed of bright and innocent young faces through which we advanced towards the altar.

.

Sylvia (spite of her modest adornment) outshone them all! Never had she looked more radiant. Never, more divine. Never on the face of the broad world (as I then felt) had man a finer or truer earnest of the existence of an angel host above.

But, a truce to these rhapsodies!

At three-score we must be well content to transcribe just three lines from the journal of what was once an ardent as well as (I trust) honest young fellow.

I did not put *this* down in my diary; for Sylvia, after, that we were married, would oftentimes come and look over my shoulder as I wrote; her arm fondly around my neck the while. But, when the parson got to the words, "Her, and none other," I experienced something like a pang, as my soul found itself straightway in India, when I saw again that beauteous Mary Holbrook, the same who had loved me so fondly—so

devotedly, and who under Divine Providence had brought me through, from death to life, by her skilful and kindly nursing. Now a sad and solitary maid for ever, and for my sake as she had written it.

The thought, believe me, dear descendant of mine! was no unworthy one. 'Twas an allowable sorrow—but one scarcely to be appreciated at its right value save by those who themselves have experienced the like.

.

I also nourished for the instant a fantastic idea, *in that (perhaps) Mary also thought of me at that self-same moment.*

I simply jot down these little fantasies in order that some young man of a future generation may see, as he reads, that human nature and human experience have cut pretty much the same figure in an age that was prior to his own.

.

I made my responses in a firm and (almost as I take it) a loud voice. Those of my beautiful Sylvia were barely audible to anyone save the parson, the clerk, and myself; but we got through the service swimmingly; and after I had publicly saluted my blushing bride, 'twas beautiful, 'twas pitiful, and most moving, to witness the scene that followed. Her bridesmaids and many other girls of her own intimates, all striving to see who should be first to kiss her, and who to be the longest about it—which some of them managed tearfully; others again, with smiles and tears. Sunshine and shower, both together!

.

A little rustic band (that would not be denied) composed of certain youths from a neighbouring parish; played before us after the wedding was over, from the church door right down to the gate. Though one of the fifes had become cracked through much service, and the tabor was somewhat constant in its bass; the clarionet, and two viols were in excellent taste and

perfect harmony. So what happened to prove amiss might be readily overlooked and all the more so, seeing 'twas a well-meant as well as a spontaneous compliment.

We distributed a few coins amid this kindly crowd from the carriage window, and as we drove off the field of the first triumph, the air was rent with shouting while we had to stand a broadside or general pelt-ing of the roses gathered up from the pathway.

.

Then the band struck up a quaint but lively air, which died gradually on the ear as we increased our distance, but which we never afterwards forgot.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

"LITTLE BLAKE."

We are settled in the country, that is to say at Hampstead, where we enjoy the odour of flowers, admire the song of the birds, and live under a sky of as clear a blue as any we knew in Warwick.

.

Sylvia reigns supreme in the little household, directress and arbitress of all. For my part I am absent all the day in the city, and at certain times half the night as well. For this reason I affect the coffee-house and clubs, where I am, if possible, better known than in the days of my youth. As a partner in Mr. Exon's firm, besides being much in the society of the men of the day, I find myself a person of more consideration than heretofore.

.

During my leisure hours I write papers based on personal observations made both at sea and ashore during my travels, and have already managed to print the following, viz.—"Speculations Touching the Sargasso Sea," "Some Thoughts on the Periodical Winds known as Monsoons," "On the Outrigger Boats of the Eastern Seas, with hints, etc., towards using the like in lieu of swift luggers for the despatch and cartel service of the King's Navy."

Also, having diligently studied "Wytfliets Booke," the Voyages of Torres, the Spanish navigator, of Abel Jansen Tasman, and of Captain William Dampier, (loaned me by Mr. Defoe), I become more enamoured of the great southern continent than ever, and am more struck with the justice and wisdom of Mr. Defoe's

predictions there anent than when first he broached the subject to me.

Strange! but perhaps not so strange after all; if descendants of mine should one day aid in colonizing and planting that rich and fertile, though far-away land!

I extract the following entry from my great diary:—
 “August the eighteenth, A.D. 1717, at half-past two of the clock in the morning, Sylvia is safely delivered of a son.”

.

So far as a man of my inexperience in these matters is capable of judgment (most infants being as like one to the other, as so many peas shelled out of the same pod), I take it that our own boy more favours the Willoughby's than the Rous's. I fancy I detect in him traits of my dear mother, and also of Dame Dorothy Trumpington. But Sylvia *will* have it that the child is *my living image!*

.

The boy, who is now three months old, *decidedly* a Willoughby, but has an air of Sylvia's family (the Herricks) which in gesture at all events, goes nigh to establish a likeness.

The smile—must I add it? the frown also (for she can frown too, upon proper occasion given) is Sylvia's, and the action and postures of the hands betray the Herrick blood in *his* veins. Nevertheless, the head is the grand old fighting head of the Willoughby's, but with somewhat in the mouth and chin that recalls my dear father.

.

It is finally settled; our boy is to be christened *Blake*, and if heaven be pleased to guard him from such accident as befel my own hot youth, I desire that he shall take up and follow the same noble profession for which I myself was originally designed.

Captain Tiptree Willoughby, my cousin, and the successor to my past commission, has consented to enact the part of godfather; and sends on in advance a curiously chased christening mug in solid silver, and of exquisite workmanship.

Lady Frothingham, who has called, and finds the child "*a true Willoughby, with all the graces of a Her-
rick, and the sturdiness of a Rous,*" has presented Sylvia with a christening robe, which I entirely lack the skill to describe. Her Ladyship has signified her desire to stand in quality of godmother.

My Sylvia is enraptured; and, Master Blake (that is to be) is noisy rather than musical; but I console myself with the reflection that he is endowed with a rare pair of lungs!

CHAPTER XXXVII.

EXTRACTED FOR THE MOST PART FROM MY OLD DIARY.
A.D. 1722.

It is now more than three years since the lamented and all-too-early death of Mr. Addison, and to my indescribable joy, Captain Woodes-Rogers, so lately superseded by Captain Phenny, whose gross misconduct and imprudence, since went nigh to ruin and wreck the colony, has been restored to his former governorship of the Bahamas.

.

17th August, A.D. 1722. Blake enters upon his fifth year. The same day (by a coincidence to say the least, remarkable) I receive from New Providence an Indian bow and arrows with quiver complete, being a present from His Excellency Captain Woodes-Rogers for Blake, also a great jar of casareep or manioc pickle and a goodly pepper-pot for myself. Nor did my worthy and distinguished friend forget to add a something for my Sylvia in the shape of a necklace of shells of great beauty, and a magnificent headgear of gay feathers wrought by the Indian women of the Bahamas. Whereupon she fairly dances with delight.

.

Blake is stood in the corner to-day and sharply admonished, in that he shot one of his Indian arrows at "Captain," our faithful old house dog.

I was in some concern about this matter at the first, seeing that many of the Indians are used to poison their arrows; but beyond the strict puncture made, I am glad to find that old "Captain" has suffered no hurt. This is reassuring, seeing that if Blake in

his careless, happy-go-lucky style should by chance wound any of his young companions, we need not apprehend for him any serious results.

But, Master Blake (who has now been forbid the use of the bow for an entire week) is threatened with our severe displeasure if he shoots at anything other than the pretty target that has been provided for him.

.

A letter to-day (the 18th of August) from my good friend, Mr. Bacon, of Bombay, in which he mentions, among other news, that his sister-in-law, Mary Holbrook (who has of late been suffering from the effects of the Indian climate) intends sailing for London in November after the weather is more settled and the N.E. monsoon fairly in.

This intelligence causes me, though I can scarcely tell why, some little disquietude.

We have no secrets; why should we? I must mention the fact to Sylvia.

.

Captain Sir Richard Steele, who is clearly of opinion that the end of the world draws nigh, complains in my private ear that King George is about to ruin the service and degrade the British soldier by introducing the clumsy and ungainly German uniform and mode of drill.

He is monstrous pathetic over this circumstance, adding that if our sergeants have their halberds taken from them and their gaiters altered, we shall have no more such victories as attended Marlborough on the continent.

I detest useless innovation, just as I hate the removal of all ancient landmarks; but still, I fail to see how they are to Germanize the Englishman (which may heaven forbid!) even if they write him his drill-book in German.

However, Captain Steele, who has of late much committed himself to the study of prophecy, avers that it portends the fall of our Empire.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

BLAKE'S FIRST "COMMAND."

We have a small sheet of artificial water on our grounds at Hampstead, wherein 'tis my great pleasure when a holiday serves me or of a Saturday in the long summer afternoons, to watch Blake as he manœuvres the little skiff I have provided for him. He is already expert in handling the oar; and, under my direction makes his first essays at navigation under canvas. He begins to steer very fairly, whether scudding or keeping full and bye, and 'tis a veritable delight to me to see him luff his little boat up into the wind's eye and pay off on the other tack at a word from myself.

But, perhaps the biggest pleasure we have (for we are both of us boys in this) is the conduct of a model sailing frigate, the gift of John Auldjo. Blake has constructed a dock and a little round fort on the margin of the pond; and 'tis mighty pretty to watch our young port admiral as he follows with half-closed eyes, his tall sterned flagship ploughing a steady furrow across the rippled water to the far side of the mimic lake, and handsomely heeled-over to the breeze. Blake's little room boasts various models beautifully moulded, one whereof I myself had had made to my order aboard the "Forte" on the voyage out to Bombay, but his "Royal Anna," as he styles John Auldjo's frigate, has the post of honour on a big stand between the two front windows.

He has also several of my pictured ships displayed on the wall; which he is never tired of showing to such of his young comrades as come over here to visit him and join in his sport on the pond.

.

If good come of it all, in future years, we shall look back, both of us, on these bright days with that

pleasure known alone to those who have been boys together. But, if my teachings shall prove to have been but the precursors of useless danger and disaster—and worse; then, with how deep a sense of self-reproach shall I be visited? Thoughts like these will present themselves at times, strive to banish them as I may.

.

The times are agitated and troublous, owing to the pretensions of the Stuart Prince.

Sir John Morris has set out again for Copenhagen with a powerful squadron to bring the newly returned Swedish King to book. Scotland, a trifle quieter, possibly by reason of the late necessary but regretful execution of the Earls of Derwentwater and Kenmuir, both brave and honourable gentlemen; but I doubt me whether even this latest severity of the law hath much endeared His Majesty King George to his subjects in London. The South Sea scheme has set all society in a ferment. I thank God, I am clear of it; not having invested so much as a single groat therein.

Nobility, and even Royalty, elbows the speculators on 'Change, and His Grace of Bridgewater is Governor of the London and Westminster Society for building houses! The Duke of Chandos heads another styled "The York Building Company," and, will it be credited when I record the circumstance? His Royal Highness of Wales is advertised and placarded everywhere as Governor of the Welsh Copper Company!

Fortunes are made and lost in the turning of a straw; and we see every day the two marked extremes of beggary and inordinate wealth. Never in the memory of man hath London presented such scenes of profligacy, drunkenness and rioting as at present, when if 'tis unfit for a lady to be abroad in the street by day, how much more is it so by night!

Ruin and desolation, as we learn, are also rife among our French neighbours in Paris, where Mr. Law's Mississippi scheme beggars its thousands. While here in our own House of Lords the Earl of Nottingham complains of these strange times in an eloquent oration.

A Bill is brought up for the suppression of atheism,

blasphemy, prodigality, and infamy of all kinds named as arising from out of the Great South Sea calamity; and one of the spiritual peers (as I hear) remarks that "'tis plainly a judgment of heaven for the profaneness of the nation."

The rejoinder whereunto, made by my Lord Onslow, is so sharp and neatly fitting, that I cannot forbear recording it.

"The noble peer, then," saith my Lord Onslow, "must needs be himself a great sinner since he hath lost so largely by the South Sea calamity."

London, still seething and heaving ere settling down to the old dead level again, and expedition to the West Indies is bruited.

There he wheels within wheels as in the Vision of the Prophet Ezekiel; but, 'tis hard to understand on what plausible pretext our statesmen could proclaim war in West Indian waters against His Most Christian Majesty of Spain, with whom we are presently at peace.

We have taken Blake from the Merchant Taylor's school, where he hath cut an excellent figure and won high ecomiums from his masters. He is barely eleven years of age, but our old friend, Lady Frothingham, has obtained him an appointment to H.M.S. "Thalia," of Admiral Hosier's squadron. I am a proud man for the moment; but, an unutterably sad one likewise, for 'tis a very different affair to run out hotly and face an unspeakable danger in one's own youth, and coolly, now, to send one's own flesh and blood, the sole hope of the family, into all the sanguinary and other hazards of naval warfare.

I began to wish the boy at a desk in our Mr. Exon's office, or, better still, back again at Merchant Taylor's; but I have put my hand to the plough; and, to look back I cannot—nay! *I must not*.

Blake is all agog to go, just as was myself at his age, but Sylvia loses her sleep a-nights, or wakes betimes with a start and a moan, as from a troubled dream.

Sylvia is perceptibly worn—and I read the heartache in her eyes and in her wan looks; but I rally her as best I may, and predict all manner of distinction for Blake. While in my own secret heart I begin to wish Admiral Hosier and his expedition at the bottom of the Red Sea!

But, the boy is a Rous. He comes of a fighting stock, and bearing the honoured name of Blake, too; methinks 'twere little short of the sheerest poltroonery to withdraw him now.

Yes! Blake *must* go, and we will set about getting him all his "bravery" on the morrow.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

BLAKE'S FIRST LETTER ON JOINING THE NAVY.

I had much preferred a peaceful cruise for our boy, such, *e.g.*, as a voyage of discovery, or, failing that, the convoy service. But he has got the *entrée* now, and delays are dangerous.

I have written to His Excellency Governor Woodes-Rogers about Blake in case Admiral Hosier's squadron should happen to call at the Bahamas.

.

Sylvia bears up bravely now that the parting is over; but, I carefully conceal from her a new danger, no less deadly than round-shot or splinters, which I conjure up, in the shape of yellow-fever or the scurvy. Though the youth and strength of constitution which may safely tide him over the attacks of disease, will avail him nothing, once the bolts of war begin to fly.

.

A letter from Blake to-day from the Downs, writ in a big school-boy hand. Perhaps you will hold me excused, oh! dear descendant, if I transcribe it in full.

"My ever dear and honoured parents,—This comes hoping you are well, as this leaves me at present. We are lying in the Downs awaiting a fair wind. The place I have to live in here is very small and dark, besides it smells badly. The other boys hid my things the first night, so I had to sleep in my clothes.

"One big boy (the Honourable Mr. Phipps) cut my hammock-cords, so that I fell on the hard deck and bled at the nose. My head akes still; but I got up and hit out, *the way you showed me*; so, blackening

his eye for him. Mr. Jervis and a small boy (that is a Marquis, and looks very dirty), crying, Bravo! Rous!!

"This put me in good heart and I pummelled the Honourable Mr. Phipps till I was like to give in from shortness of breath. The other boys say I am a Trojan! The first lieutenant (Mr. Wrottesley) spoke to me sharply at first, but he has been very kind and civil since. I like Mr. Wrottesley very much. He says *I must save some blood for the Spaniards*, and that he won't have brawling aboard.

"To-day I can do pretty well as I like, and the Marquis says he is my friend for life.

"Dear father and mother, you can see I am getting on well in the service. Give my fond love to everybody, and old Marjory too.

"And believe me ever, your most dutiful and affectionate son,

"BLAKE ROUS,
"Midshipman,
"H.M.S. 'Thalia.' "

"P.S.—I send this by a lugger called the 'Nancy,' presently waiting alongside, which goes straight to the stairs at the Tower.—B.R.

"P.P.S.—My big new knife is stolen.—B.R."

CHAPTER XL.

IN WHICH I HEAR AGAIN FROM GOVERNOR WOODES-ROGERS.

It may seem a strange sentiment to him who hath not made a similar experience, but I have begun ever since the departure of Admiral Hosier's squadron, to feel that I have a sort of vested interest in the King's navy.

We have as yet no news of the fleet, but I imagine myself already fighting the battles of my country by deputy.

Circumstances forbade my being present in person, but my own flesh and blood, Blake, to wit, is perchance at this very moment, giving a good account of the family name, and covering himself, and us, with glory! In such event, I have deserved well of my country. If he should have fallen, I shall have deserved better still. But, oh! the pain and the cost of this desert, who shall describe it? The very anticipation fills me with heaviness, and I catch myself putting on airs of enforced hilarity and gaiety, with Sylvia, which I fear me, she only interprets too truly. With a wife and a mother, in such case, 'tis folly to dissemble, but I find myself at it again and again, a poor and very sorry actor after all is said and done!

As most natural, I am everlastingly on the *qui vive* (as our French neighbours have it) for news from the West Indies, and indeed, I believe few men in my mercantile position in the city have larger or wider opportunities.

All the intelligence that has yet reached me is vague and unsatisfactory. The squadron has been seen at such a place. The Admiral has landed here or there. But not a word of any action or intended sally.

I am not alone in my anxiety, for I have in the more immediate circle of my acquaintances, some who

are anxious about the squadron, but from a totally different cause. These are persons who hold liens over certain prospective prize-moneys.

I contrive to make their selfish anxiety subserve to my more natural feeling, and gain what intelligence I may regarding the expected whereabouts of the Spanish galleons and their probable movements. Upon this I build my own theories and frame conjectures as to when and where the Admiral is most likely to open the ball.

Six weeks since my last entry on this subject, and not a solitary peg anywhere to hang a theory upon! Sylvia in doleful case; but I tell her confidently 'tis impossible there can have been any action as yet, seeing the Spanish journals seem quite as much in the dark as ours.

They are full of speculation and forebodings, but their hopes are in favour of the treasure-ships running the gauntlet under cover of the night, or else of our Admiral being so hampered with instructions as to find himself unable to act at the critical moment.

Your ordinary privateersman and your royally accredited letter of marque are the true free-lances of the sea, but the King's Admiral is a centurion with others over him. It used not to be entirely so, of old time; but, nowadays politics intrude themselves, and sea-fights come to be dictated by Ministers and Parliamentarians, most of whom are ignorant of geography and in utter darkness as to military and maritime matters.

.

I had penned these remarks at Hampstead one night just after Sylvia had retired to rest. Judge then of my surprise at receiving a letter from New Providence on the very next day exactly bearing out my recently expressed views. This letter was from Governor Woodes-Rogers, and dated at "The King's House," New Providence, in the Bahamas.

.

"I have *not* seen the boy, my dear Rous" (he wrote) "though I need not tell you how I longed to have him

ashore here, that I might embrace him for your sake, and get him a week's privileged leave from Hosier; who, I know, would have been ready to oblige me in that regard.

"Between ourselves, the Admiral is sorely vexed, being apparently hampered and thwarted in all his movements. His captains, like himself, are anxious to have the cutlasses to the grindstone, and the drums beat to quarters; but, from all I can hear, it is only a harassing succession of beating and tacking, and backing and filling among the quays and reefs of the Bastimentos.

"The galleons, meanwhile as I gather from the narrative of the master of a trading schooner now at New Providence, are lying at Darien, or Panama, having shifted over, thither, from Porto Bello, on the first intelligence of our squadron being in Spanish waters.

"Our Admiral's instructions, I may tell you *sub rosâ*, only extended to blocking up the ships in Spanish harbours, and proceeding to capture solely in the event of their venturing out.

"I fear much, lest the spectacle of Hosier dancing his hornpipe in Admiralty fetters, should have the effect of making us the laughing stock of the Dons, who are none too grave in these latitudes (let me tell you) for laughter.

"Now, unless some of these plate-waggon's venture a clandestine sortie from Panama during the dark moon, we shall have no powder burned, and no doubloons to be carted up to the Tower.

"I am heartily sorry for Hosier, who has my highest respect. . . . I am sorry for Blake, too, and indeed I had been as proud of him *as if my own son*, to have seen him giving a good account of himself under fire, and coming out with a fair share of prize-money and plate into the bargain.

"Always yours, my dear Rous, God bless you,

WOODES-ROGERS."

"The King's House,

"New Providence,

"Greater Bahamas."

CHAPTER XLI.

WHEREIN, ALAS! BOTH ADMIRAL HOSIER AND MARY HOLBROOK FIGURE.

The grand expedition has collapsed, the result indeed proving a most sorry fiasco.

Admiral Hosier, a victim less to the yellow fever that decimated his squadron, than to utter mortification and chagrin, has died of a broken heart.

Our ships also, from long continuance in harbours infested by the sea-worm, have their planking and timbers completely honeycombed, and thus short-handed, fevered, and scurvied, besides suffering every imaginable privation, they have crossed the Atlantic, straggling in one after the other, spectre-vessels, manned by literally skeleton crews. This is perhaps somewhat too poetical a trope; but the ships look white, weather-worn, and rusty, while the gallant fellows that remain on duty are more fit for the lazaretto or the sick-bay than to be at their several stations on deck.

Blake has distinguished himself, as I ever felt sure he would, in his own small way, so far, indeed, as might be expected of a lad of his age.

His cheery disposition, his alacrity and intelligence made him a favourite with all, and he did much excellent service in assisting the surgeons when he might, in their attendance upon the sick.

But this, from necessity alone, I learn from two gentlemen of the "Thalia," that whether on deck, or aloft, or at quarters, or in charge of men and boats on shore-parties, Blake has ever shown himself a boy of parts and of great aptitude for the profession. Nay! one of them assures me further than Blake is bound one day to be at the very top of the list.*

*I quote this saying, simply remarking thereon that what is bred in the bone, etc. Indeed, how could he miss being a seaman, with the blood of my grandfather, of my mother, and of myself in his veins.

He accordingly counsels me on no account whatsoever to remove him from the service as his dear mother sometimes seems to desire that I should, but, after having gotten him an extended leave in order to recruit thoroughly, to despatch him yet again to sea. He added we shall have no more of these absurd and fettering instructions after this. The evil brings about its own remedy, for, mark me! next time we are ordered abroad 'twill be "carte blanche," and we shall not wear tompions in our cannon-muzzles neither, in any Spanish port for years to come.

.

At last! Blake is home again. Sun-browned, gaunt-looking, and with an appetite (as old Marjory says) that would not disgrace a wolf.

Sylvia (I have just been reading Mr. Defoe's "Robinson Crusoe" for the sixth time) dances around Blake just now, much as man Friday danced about the old Indian in the canoe, in whom he discovered his father. I myself was so hugely diverted with this idea as it presented itself, that I could not forbear informing her of it. But, while she laughed at the conceit, she continued these lively demonstrations of affection yet further.

.

Blake fills out rapidly, and is every day in better case.

He visits his old companions, and is entertained right and left.

This is as it should be, but I am glad to note that he is as much a boy as ever, for I caught him ('twas only yesterday) taking his old "Royal Anna" down to the pond for a cruise.

His skiff he *seems* to regard with some sort of amused contempt after having himself commanded a captain's barge, manned by some of the finest men in the squadron. But with his mimic frigate he sets forth the attitude and position of the "Thalia" on such and such an occasion, much to the edification of the Thorpes

and the Wilson boys, who seem almost to live here now.

And Sylvia, who long ago declared the place *infested* with them, now not only puts up with their presence, but positively encourages them for Blake's sake. So, I find myself on Saturdays, if at home, sitting down to a regular family dinner, whereat Blake relates the most comic as well as the most harrowing incidents of the cruise to his ever-admiring guests.

.

It is just while Sylvia and Blake are so happy together, when all is going smoothly at home and in the city, that I am in receipt of a letter at the counting-house one fine morning, as I arrive from the country.

A letter written by a lady who describes herself as a stranger to me, although she has long known me by report.

She conjures me at once to visit her lodging in Bloomsbury, where a lady long known to myself in India is lying almost at the point of death.

.

It takes no prophet nor necromancer of them all to tell me this can be no other than Mary Holbrook. I apprehend, too, from the fact that she has never informed me of her presence here till about to quit the scene for ever. How sternly, how strictly, and how bravely she has kept her vow.

.

There is no time for reflection, not an instant to send for and confer with Sylvia. I accordingly engage a coach and drive to Bloomsbury forthwith.

It is not an inviting day. The wind is biting and keen, and the rain patters like small shot against the glasses of the coach windows as I rattle along the stony street.

.

My mind is full of strange thoughts, but the uppermost seems to be, "What a cruel, bleak, inhospitable day whereon for the poor soul to take wing!"

'Tis a lodging that falls far short of the luxurious; yet, 'tis one or two removes from the absolutely poor.

As I got me down from the coach, I could not choose but contrast the place with Mr. Robinson's large and handsome bungalow in the beautiful Indian garden at Byculla, where it was (*mutato nomine*) myself that lay at the point of death, a wan and wasted stranger, and where Mary Holbrook, an angel disguised as a woman, came and ministered to me in my dire extremity.

.

As I mused on the Indian past, I was ushered into what seemed a small and very dark parlour, by a servant-maid in a dingy-looking cap and apron.

While awaiting the mistress, I took the liberty of walking around the apartment, making (according to my usual habit), a survey of all it contained. I found a pair of Bombay conch-shells on the chimney-piece between two Indian palm-leaf fans, and in the centre a small sandal-wood casket of Chinese workmanship, that seemed not altogether unfamiliar to me. While above this, on the wall, framed and glazed, a portrait of dear old Dick Holbrook himself. A poor thing, in a formal attitude, with the right hand thrust in between two open button-holes in the vest, and a simper upon the lips such as honest old Dick was never wont to wear *in my day*.

While contemplating this portrait (which had been spoiled by flattery), the lady of the house entered, a faded-looking woman in black, but still with the remnant of a former beauty clinging about her.

.

Her intelligence is by no means reassuring.

Miss Holbrook continues to sink, and is even now in a state of semi-stupor. Mrs. Arnold (that is the lady's name) says it is thought she will die insensible.

But if it would be a personal satisfaction she offers to conduct me to Miss Holbrook's apartment forthwith.

Accordingly I follow her slowly, and sadly enough, up a narrow stair into the presence of my departing friend.

Everything was remarkably still; but a small time-piece of peculiar appearance that I remembered at once to have seen at Byculla, made the silence almost audible by its ticking. Now, if there be one thing that makes a sick-room (to my fancy) more miserable than need be, 'tis the solemn and deliberate accent of the pendulum.

.

Mary Holbrook, though she had a faint flush of colour on her cheek, scarcely looked so near her end, as the event afterwards proved, but as I bent over her, I noted gray hairs and other signs of the inflexible and inexorable hand of time. This brought me to consider my own days, and to reflect that I myself was no longer young, but after all, gray hairs form no criterion, and the Indian climate is answerable for much.

Perhaps 'twas best as it was. I never heard what Mary had to say to me. I had not even the dumb satisfaction of feeling her return the pressure of my hand.

.

That I have put down but little of this death-bed scene (for I *do* term it such) is to be attributed rather to some excess in, than absence of, feeling. The tale of sorrow that is put in fewest words verges most nearly on the pathetic, and if turning from this dry relation before you to the imaginary, I have essayed of my early life in London, and my three years' experiences in India, my indulgent descendant will figure to himself what must have passed through my mind as I knelt by the couch of my dying and dearest friend, I think he will acquit me of worldliness and formality on the one hand, as of carelessness and apathy on the other. For me, she wore out nights of her young life when I was raving in all the delirium of a fierce Indian fever. As for me, I went out and fought and bled for her sake when Captain Tadcaster assailed her reputation. It must needs be that two people with mutual experiences such as ours, are friends of no ordinary stamp.

I left the house thoroughly saddened, and with a slow step, but gave injunctions that I should be advised speedily in case of any change whether for better or worse.

.

Sylvia, who has got the whole story out of me, has been to town to make due enquiry and see Mary if possible. But, ah, me! on her return she whispers me in the ear that all is over.

.

Mary died at half-past twelve of the clock last night, making no sign.

.

The funeral is past and over, but I feel still a vexation which is a grief in itself.

Why did I not know all about it long before? Why was I not permitted to thank Mary for all her past goodness and show my gratitude in acts and benefits more royal than words?

.

Sylvia has surprised me with an idea.

"Were it not well, Nick!" cried she, "that you should set up a little tablet to poor Mary in our parish church?"

.

I pressed the hand of the excellent creature in silence.

.

"Sylvia!" exclaimed I, "the marble be my care, the superscription yours!"

"I have no gift in that way," responded she.

"The better for our purpose," rejoined I, "for then it will possess the merit of that simplicity which is charming as the truth itself."

.

And that tablet, dear descendant of Sylvia and of me, mayst thou see for thyself and thereon read the lines that thy lovely progenitress wrote in token of sincere regret for that silent woman that once loved her husband so well.

'Tis prettily worded, and signed with both our names.

CHAPTER XLII.

CHIEFLY FROM MY OLD DIARY AND TREATS OF AN UNEXPECTED MARRIAGE, ETC.

I receive a quaint note in a well-known up and down handwriting.

Sylvia, who hath seen it first, runs in to me where I sit in my study, holding the missive towards me, her little finger being daintily extended in a fine lady-like attitude—

“From your dear Mr. Auldjo, Nick! Your ‘Friend and Pitcher,’ your ‘*Dear Old John*’ that made so much ado in time past to keep you single. An invitation to a club supper, I’ll warrant me, or to some great racketty party where no womankind is; or it is to a cruise in a nasty, narrow and dangerous boat on that, oh! so dirty river. . . .”

“Come!” cried I, “Let’s have honest John’s news at once.”

.

Presently, raising my brows, I began to whistle, thereby betokening my extreme surprise, and this led Sylvia (herself a true daughter of Eve) to come and read over my shoulder as follows:—

“Dear Nick!” (thus ran the letter). “Have at thee for a knave! a pretty example hast set me truly! and an apter pupil thou shalt never know.

“By the time this epistle is delivered into thy proper hand, John Auldjo may have signed away the precious charter of his liberties as an Englishman; that is to say, I find myself in tow of a petticoat, and with a precious good strain on the hawser, too! So, this morning, at Bow Church, by ten of the clock, an’ thou lovest me enow, come! and there, bear witness to the latest and last strange event in the bachelor life of thine ever affectionate friend, John Auldjo.”

"P.S.—*She* is lovely beyond the powers of description; in short, the loveliest of her sex, and wears the most bewitching silk stockings the world ever saw.—J. A."

.

"In *your* place, Nick! *I* would *not* go. Nor on so brief a notice neither," exclaims Sylvia. "Besides, the provoking creature has not so much as named his bride, or described the colour of her eyes or hair."

"Perhaps she is a nobody; perhaps worse than even that. A bold-faced jig in silk stockings, with a couple of patches on the cheek, and a set smile on the carmined lips."

"Ah! I can well picture to myself the chosen of your Mr. John Auldjo."

.

"And, let me tell you," rejoined I, "that John is a monstrous fine judge. Few there be like him. He is what Jack Frenchman is apt to style a connoisseur!"

"A fico for your Frenchman!" exclaims Sylvia, with a toss of the head that fits her humour mightily. "Your John does not know a pretty girl when he sees her. He regrets his liberty already, and remembers naught of his inamorata save the style of her stockings."

.

I have no space further to pursue this theme. Let it suffice to say I could not, and did not, go; but I nevertheless drank health and prosperity to John Auldjo and his bride, that day at dinner."

.

"Who knows," thought I to myself aloud, "but that poor John, who has been under the ban so long when single, may yet come often to stretch those long legs of his under our mohagany, now that he is regularly and properly married."

"Never!" cries Sylvia, with an air of defiance prettily, because smilingly put on.

"Your John Auldo is an incorrigible; therefore, marriage will only make him ten times worse.

"He is wedded to his clubs and coffee-houses and late hours, as Mrs. Auldjo will learn but too soon.

"Besides, 'birds of a feather' (you know the rest), so, I am perfectly sure, I never could endure the wife of your 'Dear John.'"

.

The good, especially when infirm and full of years, we mourn less than the young and brave, snatched untimely from the scene.

.

I have just returned from the funeral of my ancient friend and benefactor, Mr. Barnaby. He has been ailing for so long a time that I feel really thankful to find him out of his pain at last.

In fact (hard as it may look at first blush), I had not a tear to shed. I rejoiced rather in my secret soul that all was over.

.

I am served heir to the bulk of Mr. Barnaby's fortune, say, £50,000 sterling, the savings and makings of a long life-time.

His niece, Grace, betrothed to our Blake shortly after he attained his lieutenancy, has a handsome annuity, and there are two or three liberal bequests to certain London charities.

.

I begin to feel a confidence, a sort of armed at all points sensation, such as I never knew while yet an outsider in the race of life. Grant heaven that these riches prove not my ruin! That I may avoid all rash speculation and mad dealings, and devote my fortune to the well-being of my family and the furtherance of Blake's views and comfort which are surely our own.

Times are more peaceful, and Blake has rejoined without causing his mother any such alarm and apprehension as she discovered before.

He is in English waters this time, being aboard H.M.S. "Melpomene," with the Channel Fleet.

.

Having amassed, by the favour of Providence, a considerable fortune in trade, which is much augmented by my good friend Mr. Barnaby's bequest, I take a last leave of the cares of business and retire to Hampstead, having a short time since completed the purchase of the old red brick Elizabethan house that has for a thousand reasons become so dear to us.

.

This record of mine begins, to my sorrow, to assume the semblance of an obituary; but on reflection I am of opinion that when a man arrives at a certain stage of life, he must expect to see all his older friends, as well as all prominent characters in society born long before himself, dropping off one by one, and that at not long intervals. 'Tis the way of Nature to which the world must bow, and consequently it is the way of the world as well.

1727. We have sad news by the Dutch packet to-day, and for the second time within my own memory, I find the whole nation plunged in mourning for the loss of the Sovereign. His Majesty, we read, to our unfeigned regret, died on the eleventh of June, shortly after reaching the Palace of Osnaburg.

.

I am only giving here extracts from a very full and copious diary, which my dear descendant might fail in patience to read, wherefore I omit much of the small beer that I simply chronicled for want of better pastime.

The time, as it rolls along, is placid and peaceful in its current, and we are far above anything like want; but the sunshine of happy years spent in retirement, remote from the busy crowd, is all that I care the future generation shall take for granted.

1729. Alas! and yet again, alas! My good friend and quondam patron, Sir Richard Steele, has also quitted this mortal scene.

I begin almost to dread making further entries of this nature. How the ranks thin! How few of the excellent of the earth remain to us!

1731. My honoured friend, Mr. Daniel Defoe, has also left us, but he is immortal in his books. I read "Robinson Crusoe" over again and (with the exception of the *Sequel*) with even more of zest than I had a romance.

It was our Blake's first prize-book at Merchant Taylor's and the boy was as mightily taken with it as was I myself when it first saw the light.

1732. Another gap in our serried ranks! We drop off one by one, like to those half-drowned mariners who, worn-out with clinging to a crazy raft somewhere mid-ocean, relax their hold by turns, sink, and are seen no more.

This time it is that brave and noble seaman, Woodes-Rogers, that has gone to join the greater number of his old and tried companions in arms.

I care nothing to hear of his probable successor, but rumour pretty distinctly points to Mr. Fitz-William as the future Governor of the Bahamas.

.

1735. The statute against witchcraft, and all those persons alleged to have familiar spirits, is repealed. For once, I find our great lawyers inclining to reason.

.

May 15, 1739. A letter from Blake, who is now serving abroad H.M.S. "Worcester."

"It cannot be long," he writes, "ere we let slip the dogs of war, and before this reaches your hands, we shall have singed the beards of the Spanish Dons handsomely for them! It is currently reported in the fleet that the ghost of Admiral Hosier was seen to rise from the waves last night during the anchor-watch, but I am not one apt to give a loose rein to imagination,

and feel inclined to ascribe the story to the raw new West-India rum that continues, in spite of all precaution to the contrary, to be smuggled aboard from time to time; but if the tale only gets wind in London, 'twill not be long ere it is food for the ballad mongers."*

March 13, 1740. News to-day by special cartel, of the daring capture of Porto Bello by Admiral Vernon.

Thanks be to God! Blake (who has done his duty like a man) is safe and sound.

We have quite a long letter from the lad, who is already rated a lieutenant aboard the "Worcester."

"In this bombardment we engaged the three forts at once—the Castilla d'Hierro, the Castillo de Gloria, and San Geronimo.

"Every shot of ours," writes Blake, "told upon their outworks, while the forts either fired wide or short of us for some time. But on our battering down the upper tier of the Castillo d'Hierro, Jack Spaniard and most of his mates took to their heels.

"Shortly after this we espied what we took to be a small white flag waved backwards and forwards over the battlements. Taking this for 'surrender,' our Admiral signalled us to land. We accordingly piped away the boats with an armed party, and managed our landing rapidly and without any confusion.

"Our men got through the embrasures one at a time, doing leap-frog over each other's shoulders, and, soon finding ourselves on the platform, under a misapprehension as to the truce, I addressed myself at once to engage a Spanish officer who stood at the foot of the great flag-staff determined to defend his country's standard with his life.

"I had warm work with him, but after a few vigorous passages I managed by a trick of wrist-play to disarm him, sending his sword flying to the other end of

**Many a thing said in jest turns out in earnest.* Blake's idea occurred to another, and within a month of the arrival of the story of the apparition, a ballad on Admiral Hosier's ghost was sung about the streets and a printed copy thereof, adorned with a rude cut, was sold for one penny.—J.R.

the platform. . . . He submitted quietly after this, and surrendered on the spot.

"From my soul I pitied his sad case as he drew the back of his hand slowly across his eyes when the Spanish flag came down, and our own proud St. George's ancient floated over the remains of the iron castle.

"All this time, our Admiral had the two other forts pouring shot into him at the double-quick, but he made so good play with his lower deck tier, that, besides demolishing nearly all the buildings in the seaward quarter of the town, he silenced the two forts, and sunk a sloop that lay between, under cover of their guns.

"I forget a good deal of what happened among us, it being the most exciting morning's work I had ever known; but we have got hold of the Dons treasury-chest, with the dollars in it, designed to pay the garrison. Ten thousand dollars in all, and these, it is whispered, are to be divided on Monday next among all the ships' companies, sailors and marines, by the Admiral's last order. It is most probably true, and if so, my own share ought to be something acceptable. Tell mother I mean to get her the smartest pony-carriage than can be had for money when I come back. Besides the treasury dollars there is some other very pretty plunder from the fort.

"Three hundred pieces of cannon have been spiked and destroyed, and we are going ashore to-morrow to demolish what remains of the forts. I have no hurt beyond two scratches that I scorn to notice, and which give the surgeon no trouble, but we have lost some brave fellows, as indeed, was to have been looked for.

"How I escaped is more than I can tell, as I had men mowed down beside me twice, one of whom was blown in two."

.

This represents the larger part of Blake's letter, which he styles "*as long as the maintop bowline*," and I trust I may be held excused, at my time of life, and with my feelings as a father, for transcribing thus much.

The thanks of both Houses of Parliament are voted to Admiral Vernon. In my case, the wish may be father to the thought, but methinks I am severely mistaken if that affair on the platform with the Spanish commander does not make a captain of my son.

.

A hint from Tiptree, now a Rear-Admiral retired. He has his own weight and influence, and will not fail to use them in the proper quarter at an early opportunity in Blake's interest.

.

May 29, 1740. News by a sloop of war from the West Indies. It is Blake himself that has brought her home.

Fort San Lorenzo bombarded at Carthagera; but Blake himself shall tell us all concerning this latter capture after the ship is paid off.

June 7, 1740. To our great joy and some surprise at his being so quick, Blake presents himself early this morning while we are yet at breakfast—tanned and weather-beaten, yet with a fire in his eye and an elasticity of gait that is unmistakable.

I read victory in every lineament of his mobile countenance.

Sylvia is making such a fool of herself over "the boy," as she must needs continue to style him, that I have not yet the full account of the fight. But all in good time.

.

Carthagera, an even more desperate affair than Porto Bello, but save in the particular instance of Fort San Lorenzo, has miscarried shamefully. I gather from Blake that jealousy between the naval and military forces has hindered what has otherwise been a glorious success to our arms.

.

1740. A winter such as this present one I have never as yet felt or witnessed, and I thank God we are all safely and warmly housed.

'Tis not altogether that I wax older. I am but forty-six, for complaints come to us from all sides and from persons of every age and condition.

Christmas Day.—The Thames is frozen over, and we learn that some men were hardy enough, or perhaps foolhardy enough, to venture across to the Surrey side on foot.

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These have since returned in safety, and remain the talk of the town

January 9, 1741. Tents and booths are erected on the surface of Father Thames (now as firm as any rock), and the people hold fairs. They skate, and the journals advise that a fine bull will be baited on the ice to-morrow!

But, while many seek their pleasure and amusement, most of the poorer folks must starve by reason of the cold, that and the loss of their former employments.

The distress, especially among the needy, becomes, as I learn, everyday more noticeable.

Should private charity fail to clothe and feed our suffering fellow-subjects, it cannot, I apprehend, be long before some worthy man in Parliament moves that the State charge itself with this duty and expense.

February 1. The Thames still continues to be frozen, but it has not as yet been deemed necessary to make appeal to the country, seeing that the wealthy classes, especially the merchants in the city, have been most liberal in their donations.

February 7. I have sent for my lawyer, and instructed him as to the disposal and division of two hundred and fifty pounds sterling, to be distributed among the sufferers in certain districts, and if thereby some widow's heart has been made to sing for joy, or some poor, starving families to be clothed and fed, I have more than my reward, for this I give out of my abundance, therefore with less of credit than attaches to some poor but soft-hearted fellow that dispenses his last half-crown.

CHAPTER XLIII.

FOREBODINGS.

I have ever been afflicted with some sort of compunction in regard of Sylvia's determined attitude towards the Auldjos.

With all his faults and many failings, his total want of scruple and punctilio, not to mention the thousands of ingenious fabrications wherewith he was wont to bolster up even the most improbable of assertions, and wherein he figured rather as a romancer than a liar, John Auldjo was *my friend*.

'Twas hard, I am fain to confess, to convince Sylvia that this had ever been so, and indeed I have long since discovered that no amount of logic prevails even with the most amiable of her sex, once her mind is made up on any subject whether abstract or personal.

John was the friend of my youth. We were boys of diametrically opposite ideas, and, *therefore*, took to each other. I was probably flattered at first by John's notice of myself and of my sketches in caricatura, and John equally so at finding himself occasionally depicted therein.

In a word, we became necessary to each other. I loved John for his kindly and hearty appreciation, his un-failing bonhommie, and that buoyancy and elasticity of spirit which never seemed to fail him not even in his darkest hour.

John, on the other hand, was touched at my blind and youthfully sincere admiration of his many brilliant qualities, and, to do him even-handed justice, I must add that my ardent and enthusiastic defence of himself and his motives, in a mixed company on a certain occasion, when all else decried him, won for me a regard that was lasting as his life.

True, *that regard* may have been shaken in the

course of events subsequent to our youth, but I honestly believe that in spite of all this, John Auldjo trusted me to the end more than any man living.

It was for my sake and the sake of old times that he never once alluded in his latter days to Sylvia as the cause of our semi-estrangement, but I am sure that poor John felt an inward wound which his loving regard for myself alone prevented him from revealing. So, while I had, for domestic reasons, to avoid in so far as possible all public companionship with John, I found it a thing impossible to refrain from privily giving him the right hand of fellowship, and indulging however fitfully in his really delightful society.

This was just the one secret, alas! in which my beloved Sylvia could not share. However loosened it might be, I could not bear the thought of the bond between brisk John Auldjo and myself being utterly dissolved; but Sylvia, being implacable in this direction, and further, convinced that John was *utterly bad*, simply because she had taken it into her head, I did not choose to vex her by mentioning any casual meetings I might have had with John, nor the huge joy he expressed on seeing me. Many and many a time, screwing up my courage to the sticking point for the scene inevitably to follow, but having an honest regard for my ancient companion as well as a changeless and increasing love for my wife, I exercised such tact as was mine; but whether that tact was in right discretion or not, I must leave my honourable descendants to determine. Methinks my age is manifest in the proximity of this preface, what I simply wish is that those who are to come after me may have the proper gauge of my motives in this matter.

In my more private moments, solitary in my study, in the dim dreamy twilight of the little room, and watching the coals as they sank smouldering in the grate, would I recall the days when John watched by my bedside with all the love and fidelity of a woman. This was when I met with the accident, which, while it diverted the stream of my young career into a different channel from that in which it naturally ran, had been the means under Providence, of making a man of me.

The many nameless services he then performed for me so cheerfully, the books he brought me to read, the droll stories he would relate as he sat on the foot of my bed, and, above all, the atmosphere of life and light he seemed to carry about with him, came back upon me with extraordinary vividness.

I recalled the many times, too, that I had feasted and drunk where John had been the sole entertainer, and felt no small sense of shame when I considered how poor had been my return, but John's pocket in those days was always well ballasted with silver, whereas the possession of pocket-money was an event in my young life *to be marked with a white stone*—(chalked up, as John would have it!)

Whence all John's means came from, it was not for me to inquire, nor was I capable of the meanness of asking the question.

He may have gamed. He may have dabbled in the stocks, fashionable enough amusements, both! but he had also a fair salary at the Admiralty, and always paid his shot like a man. "Hang it all, Jack," he used to say, "I despise those fellows that pay their just debts with a flying-topsail and leave the Portsmouth washerwoman lamenting."

Anything thing. John affected no low company. On the contrary, it was with men of parts, wits, men of letters and fashion, not to mention officers of the Navy and Army that he loved most to consort.

Again, he was no bully, nor brawler. He loved fair linen, and put on quite a petit maitre air at the coffee-houses. I have often thought that he was one of those that loved to be held worse than he really was, and this apparently evil reputation that he had helped to fasten upon himself by his extravagant talk, together with the lying romances which he was for ever concocting, perhaps did more towards barring our not too inhospitable door again him when I came to be rich and he poor.

Then the bare reflection that John might be in need or even dependent on another for a dinner, while I sat at home in ease, seemed to spoil the flavour of the glass of sack at my elbow. Time will beget circumstances ('twas thus I reasoned with myself), and by

some turn of the wheel of fortune as simple as unexpected, John may come to find favour in Sylvia's eyes, and she and John's wife may yet be holding amicable and pleasant converse in the drawing-room over there, while I have old John in the big chair opposite me here, pipe in mouth, rising (as 'twas ever his wont) to poke the fire, and making the roof to ring with many a lively sally and many a hearty peal of genuine laughter.

.

When I came into the drawing-room to take my customary dish of tea, I could not forbear from making a remark,

"Dear heart," cried I to Sylvia. "What does it mean to have an absent person vividly present to one's mind; to have one's whole soul unaccountably filled with him, the very minutest detail of an early friendship unrolled before one, as on a chart?"

"A most unlucky sign," replied she. "Heaven forbid. I hope and trust 'tis no one going to die. My dear father noted the like when old Mr. Redmayne was called away."

For my own part, I never was very deeply tinctured with superstition, but here I could not avoid an involuntary shudder, which Sylvia, perceiving, she advanced towards me, laid her two beautiful white arms across on my shoulder, and looked steadily into my eyes.

.

"Sylvia, my love!" exclaimed I, "you will forgive me the thought, but I fear me it goes hard with brisk John Auldjo at this moment."

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She replied not a word, but suffered her bright head to sink upon my shoulder till it rested against my own.

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"Sylvia, darling!" cried I. "If you had only known how he loved me!"

CHAPTER XLIV.

THANATOS.

Was it chance? News of an ill sort ever flies fast, and the messenger thereof, whosoever he may be, suffers less grass to grow beneath his feet on the journey than does the man who runs to apprise one of a stroke of good luck or the birth of an heir.

.

A battered-looking beau, with (methought) a somewhat theatric air, took opportunity to call upon me next morning at my address in the city.

There was a something in the style of this man, in his bearing, his manner, and, above all, in his speech, that transported me as by magic to those dear old days when I had my lodging with Mrs. Counsell, and used to visit Drury Lane a nights with Mr. Masterman and Harry Redmayne.

This served to predispose me in his favour malgré a dissipated complexion and a shabby exterior.

"I took the liberty of waiting upon your honour," said he, with a subdued air, but still with an affected flourish of a napless hat, which he had hitherto carried under his arm, "to inform you of the sad fate that has overtaken a valued, and, if I might be permitted to asseverate as much, a mutual friend."

.

"Mr. John Auldjo, good sir! breathed his last, but yesterday afternoon in these arms. It is true that his end being in a manner sudden, he had no opportunity of receiving the last consolations of religion, but, I believe, nevertheless, that dear old John has found, ere this, his billet in another and a better world. 'Hang

it all!' (he exclaimed early yesterday morning), 'I am no theologian, Tom! but I trust I shall be found ready to slip my cable when my number is seen flying aboard the admiral.'

"He ever availed himself of some sort of naval parlance, in his intervals of consciousness.

"'Lay me alongside of her, Quarter-master! D'ye hear? Hard down the helm! Ease off a bit! . . . Steady! So!! . . . Out grappling irons! . . . Yard-arm and yard-arm! . . . Lash us together! Boarders! away! Follow *me* my lads! . . .'

.

"When, awaking to semi-darkness and poverty, and the total absence of scenic effect, in his humble surroundings he would mutter, 'Tut tut! Tom! Dreaming—dreaming again! What's the matter with poor Poll there a-piping her eye, in the corner? Such silken stockings, man, with golden clocks to them, as she used to wear, too! A monstrous fine woman! Tom.'

.

"Again, remounting his naval chimera. . . 'How goes the fight? . . . He shows no sign of striking yet?"

"'None,' whispered I in his ear. 'His metal, I doubt me, is heavier than aught that we carry. . . .'

"'Ach!' exclaimed he, in a throe of mortal agony. 'A shot 'tween wind and water, lad. Keep it from Jack Rous, . . . 'twould break his kindly old heart to know on't!

"'I doubt me, I'm done for, Tom! What will England say? . . . and Poll? . . . God bless Jack Rous! . . . Tell him, Tom! tell him . . . tell . . .' but the sentence never was finished.

"He fell back into my arms with a smile on his lips, and such a wondrous, beautiful expression as his sweet mother might have gifted him withal in days gone by; or such, indeed, as she herself had worn in her own beautiful and early youth.

"The beauty of the dead face had some sort of fascination for me. . . . I could not choose but admire,

and wish that heaven in its beneficence, had been pleased to make *me* such a man."

.

"Thus, sans any show of penitence, sans remorse, sans sorrow even, passed away out of this wicked and always unsatisfying world, that most extraordinary personage, John Auldjo—kind, loving, prodigal though avaricious, fickle yet staunch.

"His notions differed from most people's, and, what was but romance in John, was a lie with the rest of all mankind.

"He had his own most cherished illusions, too, for John lived, I must tell you, sir! in a world of his own creation, that he had blown like a huge bubble, about his own head. In this distracted world of ours, he posed as a sailor, a diplomatist, a wit, and a man of fashion, and let me know that he had forgotten more of the traditions of the stage than *I* had ever learned! But though he had generally the change for a guinea in his breeches-pocket, he always, latterly especially, spoke of himself as a poor man. And, what he but too often denied his wife and family whom he truly loved, he incontinently lavished upon himself or some boon companion. His Eldorado, worked out, all his prize-moneys, his spoils of Spanish churches and monasteries, his kegs of doubloons and pillar-dollars are vanished into thin air; and, at this very moment, sir! I protest, there is an execution in the house!"

"What!" cried I, with rising indignation, "they would not distraint upon the paltry coffin, would they?"

So saying, I bade the play-actor (for such the man really was) to wait till I had my horse put-to; when getting into the coach together, we drove to what once had been brisk John Auldjo's lodging in Fleet-street.

Here we were admitted by a tearful wench in a check apron, whereof she held up one corner to her eye. She passed us into the parlour, a mean enough looking apartment too, when all's said and done.

Her mistress, she said, was in her own chamber, but would be with us anon.

Meanwhile, I could not but see through a partly open door a couple of pale-faced city children at play on the floor of the adjoining room, to all present appearance quite unconscious of the fell blow that had but so lately bereft them of the author of their existence.

The little lady, none too clean nor well-ordered (be it known), sat on the floor, with her back against the wainscot, and a dinner-plate upon her knee. Her spoon made a little clatter that jarred my nerves somewhat.

"Tinker," "tailor," "soldier," "sailor." "Sailor!" cried she. "'Tis a sailor I'm to have to my sweetheart this time, Jack!"

"Pish!" returned the son and heir, quite after the manner of his sire. "An you had not swallowed three on 'em, Sal, 'twould have been 'thief!' and mate good enow for thee, too!"

'Twas but a little game of plumb-stones after the tart had been already well-devoured, and vastly diverting they seemed to find it.

Soon young John crept forward and peeped with head a-one side, through the narrowed doorway, but perceiving a strange face in the other apartment beat a somewhat hasty retreat.

Whereafter the other little face appeared in the doorway less shy than the boy. She that owned the pale little face advanced towards me on my beckoning her to do so; and taking kindly, as is the manner of little maidens of that age, to an elderly man, she suffered me to stroke her head and take her on my knee.

It was at first a matter of some little surprise to me to perceive no signs of grief on the frank and open countenance. No tears in the large and trustful eyes; but calling all my philosophy to my aid (and I had much need of it here), I conceived that the suddenness of the shock had deprived her of the faculty of realising her unspeakable loss.

"You do not know who I am, my dear!" said I, after a pause, during which I had been tracing in her innocent features, a likeness to the John of long-ago.

"I am an old friend of your dear father."

"Poor old dad!" said she, at the same time shaking her locks at me, but added with an air of childish wisdom, "Dad is gone to heaven."

"I humbly trust so, my dear," said I, scarce able to repress a rising tear "Nay! I'm sure on't for 'tis there that all good people go, and whither if we be only good Christians ourselves, we may yet one day hope to follow them."

.

There is no such thing as standing on one's dignity with a child; and where one is himself a father, there springs up as in the perfect course of nature, an equality between infancy and age, at once singular and beautiful.

She realised the equality intuitively, and placing one little hand fondly upon my shoulder, and looking me full in the eyes, inquired my name of me.

"You have heard your dear father speak often enough of Jack Rous, I'll be bound?" said I.

"Jack Rous! You! Jack Rous! Nev-er! *Jack Rous is a boy!*" and straightway leaping from my knee, she fell to limping about the room. "*That's the way,*" cried she, with a bright smile, dad says, "*Dear old Jack Rous gets through the world.*"

.

Here I rose instinctively to my feet at the approach of a tall, dark lady, whom I divined on the instant to be the newly made widow of poor John.

In her face I could read the remains of a rare beauty, not by any means in harmony with the faded finery that she wore. Her eyes were red and swollen from much weeping, and her utterances broken at intervals by sobs and moans, were full of expressions of the most poignant sorrow. These blended with a running narrative of straits and difficulties, contrasted (volubly enough) with memories of days of comparative splendour, when John had first wooed and won her to grace (as he loved to phrase it) his humble home.

Six suitors (no less) and one of these a peer of the realm had she sent empty away, all for the love she bare John Auldjo, happier so, to share a crust with him in the lodging he had provided, and to console him in his troubles and disappointments, than to wear the coronet of a countess, as she might easily enough have done, had she only said the word, etc.

"You may possibly not have heard, sir!" said she (in somewhat of a tragedy voice), "that we have an execution in the house, and I am at my wits' end as to how I am to provide a decent funeral for my dear departed husband, not to mention the wine and cake so suitable on the occasion, for such as may choose to honour us with their presence. John used to be so particular, nay fastidious, in such matters, and I feel sure . . ."

"My dear madam," exclaimed I, with a gesture of sympathy and deference. "You may rest satisfied on that score. Pray console yourself, as I have already caused the execution to be stayed, and if you will permit me the privilege as well as the satisfaction, I purpose charging myself with the expenses of the funeral as well. In old times I owed poor John, somewhat; therefore it need not in anywise offend your delicacy should I beg to offer you a draft upon my bankers towards providing you with whatever may be most requisite or desirable in the present pressing aspect of affairs.

Hereupon the poor woman fell a-crying again; but soon recovering herself, added, "I have heard my dear departed husband assert not once, but many times, that he had been happily instrumental in making your fortune. But gratitude is a rare quality, besides I had no idea up to now that John had been an actual creditor of yours. Your kindness, sir, is perfectly unexampled; for of all those gentlemen whose fortunes John, from his once happy and influential position, had been the means of making, you are the only one that has come forward when those near and dear to him stood at their direst need."

Here she burst again into tears, and burying her face in her hands (her elbows resting on the table at which she was seated), gave way to such a fit of sobbing as went nigh to unman me.

I essayed to console her as best I might, and after the fit subsided and she became more calm, she put her hand into her big pocket, and drawing thence a door-key, presented it to me.

.

It needed no words to express her meaning, and my companion, the Thespian, who, during our colloquy had been standing deferentially aside, beckoned me to follow him. "He is lying, sir," whispered the actor, "in what he was wont to style his library." And marching on a little in advance, led the way to the door. This I gently unlocked, and we entered a small and barely furnished apartment, built about with rows of deal shelves, still graced with no small quantity of books. Great gaps, however, yawning at intervals among the sets, had suggested to an even less imaginative mind than is mine, that the pawnbrokers or Longobardi could best account for the deficiencies.

A small square table still littered with manuscripts and quills stood in the centre of the room. A bare and dingy couch occupied one end, while at the far end, and opposite to the only window, lay a long, flat, thin object, concealed from view by a white sheet, and reposing on a rickety looking bed with faded tester and hangings.

I shuddered to think that this form, so drawn out, so flat and so narrow, represented all that was once rare old John Auldjo.

But it was matter of surprise with me, when the play-actor had reverently drawn aside the cambric handkerchief that had till now concealed the features, to observe, that however wasted the form, the face was no longer the old John, but the young John as I had first known him. Yet not young John altogether, but rather his effigies modelled sharply in virgin wax—pallid, placid, perfectly still, and yet with an expression of mute happiness that touched me to the soul.

CHAPTER XLV.

MOTHER EARTH.

I have no great genius for funerals; in short, I avoid the like occasions so far as I may.

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'Tis held to be fit or becoming that some sort of mournful ceremony should be observed in committing the bodies of those we love to the earth, but I am clearly opposed to the practice of employing the mercenaries of the undertaker.

Indeed, 'tis hard to conceive any sight more horribly grotesque than a couple of mutes with their huge black insignia of woe displayed on either side of a doorway, while the *funeral-waits*, fellows that weep crocodile tears from the one eye, while they wink at the housemaids with the other. Slaves of corruption and the worm, whose soul's price is mostly a pot of small beer.

Then, again, the curious, gaping crowd they have always hanging like a fringe about their sable skirts: the butcher's boy with his long, wooden tray, the girl with yoke and milk-pails dangling therefrom, the youth with his range of pewter tankards on a board, the baker's mercury with a groaning basket on one arm; to say naught of the maids belonging to the next door houses on either hand, leaning over the area-railings, chatting, laughing, and regarding the spectacle with precisely the same gusto as if it were either a wedding or a public execution!

The street, or rather that part thereof in which John Auldjo's lodging lay, was in a very pretty ferment that afternoon, and when it came to be seen that two well-appointed carriages, videlicet, Mr. Harry Redmayne's and my own, were drawn up in rear of

the hearse, it was noised abroad that the poor gentleman about to be taken forth to the churchyard, was a person of some consequence, if not of distinguished connections.

.

Young John in a decent suit of black sat beside me in my coach, silent and amazed, yet with no means of expressing the perplexity he was in.

Harry Redmayne's handsome chariot followed closely behind ours—but it was empty, and musing over the fact as I found it, I could not but regard the complement as an empty and a senseless one; though, perhaps to do Harry justice, 'twas all he *dared* do in honour of a sworn associate and boon-companion, as Mrs. Redmayne was exactly one of those who did not grasp the fact that death levels all distinctions, or that it might be possible for a person to whom she had taken an antipathy, to be otherwise than a bad man even when screwed down in his coffin!

'Twas some consolation to me to reflect as we crept along at a snail's pace, that a sinner may find more mercy with the God whom he has outraged, than with his censorious brother-man, whom he has never personally injured whether by word or deed!

.

The most moving part of the ceremony (to my mind) was after the body of poor John had been lowered to its last resting-place, when I led up little John to take his last look ere the grave-digger should begin to shovel in the earth.

These were the first tears that little John had shed, as he clung to me sobbingly, while the clods fell with a dull, heavy, hollow sound on the coffin lid.

My own eyes, at first obscured with a tender mist, fairly welled over, and it reminded me as I looked down into the rapidly closing tomb, that *there* lay buried also with dear old John Auldjo, the age of Steele and Addison, of Dr. Swift and of Daniel Defoe. I, too, had lived the better part of my life, and the brave old days of Queen Anne had passed away for ever.

Mr. Barnaby, Woodes-Rogers, Masterman, Dick Holbrook, Mary, and now, rare old John Auldjo.

.

"You are surely not well, sir!" exclaimed little John, with an air of concern that was extremely natural to his present countenance.

"Nay! Jack," said I. "I am simply an older man than I had thought for. When it comes to my turn I fear not a single man of my old acquaintance will be left to follow me to God's acre."

It was not possible for so young a creature to take in the full breadth of the pathos that underlaid the saying, but looking up at me, filled with a wondering sympathy, and holding my hand in his, he kept strict silence of the rest of the journey.

CHAPTER XLVI.

THE TWO WIVES.

So, one fine day, the wish I had formerly conceived in the solitude of my study, came into being as a reality, for not only has Sylvia, kind-hearted soul! been to the city to visit and try to console Mrs. Auldjo; but she has besides of her own thought, actually conveyed her hither, and as I sit in the great chair by the study fire meditating a settlement of my property, I can distinguish the voices of the two wives, through the half-open door, blending pleasantly together, just as I had once dreamed they might. But at what a price hath this friendliness been brought about!

Before it could possibly have happened 'twas needful that poor John should have been removed from this mortal scene, and it touches me sadly to reflect that although the grass has not yet had time to grow over John's head, his widow should be able to give herself to laughter! But, here I forget how apt extremes are to touch. Nay! 'tis but the revulsion of feeling, the very relief and outcome of the sorrow itself.

The only historic example to the contrary, which dwells in my memory, is that of our unfortunate young Prince Henry, who perished off the coast of France in "the White Ship," and whose father, the King, was never afterward known to smile.

'Tis clear to me that I begin to age, for I find myself noting down (mayhap to the distress of an indulgent reader) these little philosophisings in my already-too-crowded diary, as if new discoveries! or things (forsooth!) that had not occurred to other and more reflective minds than mine, a thousand times before!

Out upon thee John Rous! for a garrulous old knave!

"She is good honest delft," saith Sylvia, "but from your clear account of the fashionable and fastidious friend of your hot youth, I had at the least expected porcelain!"

"In manner more theatric than becomes a lady; also more impulsive, and with less of self-restraint than fits a woman of her years. Unguarded in her speech: apt, innocently enough, to say awkward things, and yet anxious withal, to avoid offence. In brief, I find her open, frank, and sincere, but wearing her heart all too exactly on her sleeve. 'Tis a matter of no small wonder to myself," continued Sylvia, "considering what have been her surroundings, and what her temptations and miseries, how truly honest and fresh the woman is to-day."

.

"Like takes to like," cried I. "In her, poor John *must* have found a kindred spirit!"

"Not so, by any means, if it be for me to judge," quoth Sylvia. "John Auldjo took to her simply because so unlike himself; whilst she, touched by the memory of the tender and earlier flatteries of his adoration, now defends him even where unattacked, and against what were her own sober convictions born of the most rude and bitter experience. Of one thing, I am perfectly determined. I would never dream of trusting her with a single guinea, nor even a broad crown piece, while I could lay it out for her myself. Money with her is a sort of fairy means of getting at a short-lived present pleasure. She takes no thought of the morrow. And, *if* I could bring myself to forgive 'your John' somewhat, *it would be precisely on the score that she is no housekeeper!*"

.

While I owned to myself that there was an undoubted show of reason in Sylvia's judgment; I was secretly delighted to find that she had rightly appraised the better points in Mrs. Auldjo's nature, and indeed before the evening was well spent, we had carpeted a scheme for the benefit of the poor little orphans, in whose welfare she now began to take the warmest degree of interest imaginable.

CHAPTER XLVII.

ANDROMACHE.

As with the young tiger who has come even before the naturally appointed time to taste of blood, so with that man or maid who has made early experience of the popular applause that greets the apt performer upon the dramatic stage.

The delirium of the first success ever leaves its mark, and it matters not how late in life the trumpet of public approbation may sound again in the ravished ear, the whole blood is stirred thereby, and the actor re-awakened in the soul, which smelling the mimic battle afar off, burns once more to tread the boards with haughty and impassioned stride.

.

Nor was Mrs. Auldjo's a case by any means to be excepted.

We had a letter from her ('twas barely a month from the date of her widowhood) to announce to us that she had accepted an engagement at Drury Lane.

Further on, we had a notification of a benefit to which I was requested in exceedingly polite terms, to permit my name to be printed as one of her patrons.

.

"'The Distrest Mother!' and a very apt title, too," cried Sylvia, "but do you really intend to favour Mistress Auldjo in great staring letters on the bill, or to set yourself forward at this time of day as a patron of the drama in your best wig and a flowered waistcoat, perched up in a stage-box above the orchestra! Why! all Thames-street will be agog at the news, and 'twill go hard if it does not spoil your credit upon

'Change! Out on't! an *I* lend myself to anything of the sort! A most impudent baggage, and with no more regard for her young than an ostrich. Little Jack and Sal must go barefooted I'll warrant, so that her ladyship may wear gew-gaws and spangles. And, mark! what an exemplar for the starving and half-abandoned children to have their mother coming home 'twixt night and morning, between two half-tipsy chairmen, and with the paint still sticking on her face. 'Twere a scandal to countenance it."

"Nay!" rejoined I (with that feeling of broader sympathy that is born of travel and an extended association with the world), "it but marks her independence. What she wins is for herself and the children too. Besides, is not the stage as honest a means of livelihood as any? If she succeeds, for instance." ("If!" quoth Sylvia.) "And suppose she should, and beguile another Peer of the Realm, now that there is no John Auldjo to bar the way, dost think the little boy and girl would not continue to suffer?"

.....

"'Twere best in my opinion were you to take young Jack to Mr. Exon's, and that I had Sal about me here. Then, the mother might play 'Andromaché' or any antique hussy's part without let or hindrance."

"'Tis but an honest independence," said I, "that she purposes to gain by the exercise of those talents where-with Providence has gifted her."

"Honest fiddlestick!" added Sylvia warming (for to do her justice, she had herself an honest prevention against the drama). "Let's propose to take the children off her hands entirely, and I'll be bound she acquiesces in pretty set terms. Better this, than countenancing her in her extravagant and wasteful follies."

To this I demurred, and even made some little show of oppositeness, knowing full well that tactics of this complexion would best serve me to gain possession of the children, an object that I had nearly at heart.

So, after some further resistance, I came round (hypocrite as I was!) to her way of thinking. Thus securing my end.

Another in my (then) position had probably, methought, tried to turn her flank by a different method, to wit, by suddenly agreeing to her proposition and thus causing her, after a regular womanly fashion, to take up with the first proposition, at which she had at the outset displayed so much indignation.

It had mattered little, which way the affair turned, for in either case the children had been provided for. Mrs. Auldjo's talent had bettered their fortunes on the one hand, our influence and credit on the other. But, I was secretly pleased at the turn events had taken, because, granting that Jack and Sally came to us; it would be a better atmosphere for them altogether.

"All's well that ends well!" said I. "We shall write to 'Andromaché' to-night, making her the offer—and—and—don't you think it would be a gracious act to take a box at the very least, for 'The Distrest Mother!' There is no need, you know, to go, and you can help me to indite such a message as will be acceptable."

"One would think you were made of money, John Rous!" cries Sylvia, "or that you had one of John Auldjo's galleons full of silver ingots from the Spanish Main now lying in the Thames. But do as you will in this affair, though to my way of thinking you have done quite enough already."

.

After a little further fence and parry, we settled the business very happily, and wrote our joint manifesto to Mrs. Auldjo that same night before bedtime.

CHAPTER XLVIII.

IN WHICH MY "LOG" STILL CONTINUES TO REEL OUT.

1748.—Oct. 1.—Blake gazetted captain. Thank God!

Oct. 15.—This is Blake's wedding day! And Sylvia, though already far past the hey-day of youth, is radiant as the bride herself.

Our Blake looks mighty handsome in his uniform-trappings as he stands gallantly at the altar with his sword upon his thigh. For my own part, I experience a feeling of pride and satisfaction that words entirely fail me to describe.

I begin already to hail in myself the progenitor of a race of British sailors, and my thoughts carry me back to the fighting days of the commonwealth, when my dear mother's father so nobly distinguished himself in the great battle with Van Tromp off the Bill of Portland.

'Twere hard to tell wherein Sylvia glories the most. Her brave son or her new-found daughter. She simply *worships* Blake, but she never can make too much of Grace.

.

August 15, 1749.—Blake has been absent nearly a year, and Grace, who continues to stay with us, much to our comfort, has just been brought to bed of a boy.

.

Would that Blake were here in person for the christening, but as that is a thing impossible, we have agreed among us with an unanimity truly wonderful (considering the occasion) and the boy is accordingly named Barnaby Blake Rous. But while in fancy I am dedi-

cating my grandson to the service of Neptune and Bellona, I find myself gazetted to the Commission of the Peace for the County!

.

I begin to find myself complaining of the climate and with a so strange longing for change. Far-away Penzance I find too chilly even in autumn, and Torbay not nigh warm enough. At such times I catch myself sighing for the balmy airs of the south, the unspeakable blue of sea and sky, and all the music once wont to salute the ear under the tropic moon. As northern man ages, he should, by slow degrees, begin to approach the equator. To *approach* it only in my opinion, but never to attain to it. Since within the tropic belt alone he can renew his youth like the eagles, and so cease for long years to feel the burden of existence.

The rheumatism attacks me fiercely, and especially in my lame leg, but 'tis not in my nature to complain, so I endeavour to make the best of it.

I find I read the journals now best at arm's length, and yielding at last to the entreaties of Sylvia, I mount a pair of gold-rimmed glasses.

All these things are significant, and when I meet old friends now in the street, I begin to note grey hairs and wrinkles, a certain stoop in the shoulders I never remarked before. And if it be winter time or early spring weather, a sort of cough that seems to prædicate mortality. For my own part I have lived rapidly and so, without rusting.

.

Few men have witnessed more stirring events in the course of a single lifetime, but while lamenting my inability to bear that part in affairs for which nature doubtless originally intended me, I am filled with a sense of thankfulness to the Almighty for all His mercies *and for the circumstances He has created for me.*

If I but knew it, I must be already more than fully compensated for all the crosses and disappointments of my early days.

A sense of freedom and sunshine and fresh air comes to me, as I live in Blake the life I would have chosen for myself. Sometimes though a foolish tear *will* steal into my eye, as when regarding my handsome young captain I reflect that with his advantages I might have been Admiral of the Fleet at my present age. But God, who in His infinite wisdom has seen fit to decree me the condition of a simple citizen, has realized the darling wish of my heart in the epaulettes on the broad shoulders of my son.

I had always thought that Sylvia, God bless her!

.

NOTE.

Here our ancestor's diary-extracts break off—several pages are totally missing. But at the end of the book is fastened in, a paper in a different hand, written, as will be seen, by a clergyman, an old friend of the family.

This closes the story most fitly, but the hiatus is one ever to be regretted. "Hiatus valde deplendus," as poor Vincent would have put it.

SYLVIA ROUS,
Melbourne.

1854.

SUPPLEMENTARY.

CHAPTER XLIX.

(*By the Rev. John Halpin, R.N., sometime Chaplain aboard H.M.S. "Actæon."*)

Sept. 20, 1759.—We have wheeled him into "Blake's room" (as it is called to this day) where he can bask in the sunshine that streams through the double window, and have the pictures and the model-frigates under his immediate eye, as also the sword that Blake had wrested from the Spanish commander at Porto Bello. He is full of faculty and design as of old, but never so happy as when we read to him from the "Naval Chronicle," the "Navy List," too, generally lies at his elbow on the little table, beside his glass and medicine bottle, and he never tires of tracing his younger cousin, Tiptree, and Blake, in their respective careers, nor of reading through his big glasses the brief mention of Rear-Admiral Tiptree Willoughby's bye-gone glories in the reign of good Queen Anne, his mode of fothering a sail to be used for stopping a leak, or his special devices towards the raising of sunken vessels, etc., or the brilliant and dashing exploit of Lieutenant Blake Rous at the reduction of Porto Bello.

.

The book always flies open of itself at these notable passages, yet he nevertheless affects to seek them out as though they were so much news to himself.

You cannot please him better than by getting him to recite the adventure of Blake at Porto Bello, but it becomes too wild and too exciting for the old man now. We avoid also the narration of his own desperate duel with Captain Tadcaster (in the days of his youth at Bombay) for a like reason.

He has no special disease that his physicians can name: they only tell me he is dying a little earlier than his forefathers, and from a gentle and gradual decay of nature.

His temper is better than that of most sick-room prisoners, and he is very patient withal. Mrs. Rous sits with him more than half the day, besides a good part of the night, and reads to him morning and evening from his old big print church service, himself making the responses in a low, but clear voice.

At other times Blake, who is happily at home and on leave, reads him the naval and other news of the day.

Some days he finds himself brighter than others, and accepts with a pronounced gratitude such little trifles as we may have procured to tempt his appetite withal. But again there are times when he looks as though he cared not, and appears dull, and prone to sleepiness.

On these occasions he will become pettish if pressed to take exactly what he had most desired of us the day before.

These were times of trial for us all, seeing when we had presented what he longed for (so as the same ran not counter to the stricter orders of the physicians) he motioned it away with a gesture expressive of apathy and fatigue.

It was my own personal lot to sit with him occasionally in the long autumn afternoons, and I observed latterly that he dozed a little, and muttered to himself at times; now fancying himself at sea; then at Warwick, and again at Bombay, and so on, and all by turns.

As I took occasion to remark before, it was a great blessing that my good friend, Captain Blake Rous, with his wife and little boy, were at this period on a visit to the worthy old couple. Their presence was as a tower of strength to the "ancestor," as the sick man had lately come to style himself: and he specially loved in his less heavy moments to have his little grandson Barnaby, to play about in the room; for although a good-sized boy, and a midshipman to boot, he was as full of tricksy and engaging ways as a mere child.

If he was as the apple of the eye, to his fond young mother, he was even more idolized, if possible, by his grand-parents.

Never was boy made more of, nor more largely indulged. Yet, for all this, I remarked with sincere pleasure (as an old naval instructor myself) the consideration and respect the young rascal showed for his grandfather, or with what attention he would stand between the old man's knees and listen to his artless stories. It might be of County Guy and the Dun Cow, or the blowing-up of the "Devonshire," the funeral of Sir Cloudesley, or about himself, and the day he put on his first and only uniform, and the little prayer he made thereupon, and the like.

.

Sept. 14.—The Ancestor's birthday.

A lovely autumn afternoon and the window open, the better to admit the sunshine and the fragrance of the garden into the apartment. The old man who had been dozing at intervals during the day and talking to himself concerning the past, made me a sign.

On my approaching and bending over him, he made as though he would raise his hand. This I took gently in both my own, and pressed it in token of my desire and anxiousness to serve him.

"Go! Go!" said he. "Tell Sylvia—Blake. Bring me the boy, good friend—Little Barnaby."

I pressed his hand once more. When gathering breath again, he murmured, "Use despatch!"

I paused for a moment, it was but to settle the pillow at his back; then with as light a step as I could manage, I left the room to carry out his wishes.

.

With his Sylvia's arm around his neck as she leaned against the big chair, and Captain Blake and little Barnaby kneeling at his feet, he looked out across the tiny lake on the bright autumnal landscape beyond, wrapped in his own thoughts.

.

"A new heaven," he said in broken words. "A new earth, and there shall be no more sea."

After this we rather guessed at than understood his meaning.

Methought I could distinguish the name of Sylvia the latest on his lips. Then at a sign from myself, Captain Blake led up little Barnaby to kiss his grandfather. Whereafter the old man spoke no more, and so gradually, so gently, and so peacefully did he depart, that none of us knew where the marvellous change ended or began.

.

As I write in my own apartment, the window blinds are all drawn down close, and Silence with her twin sister Sorrow reigns absolute in the house.

POST-SCRIPTUM.

This has nought to do with the diary, but I desire to place it on record that I am even now engaged on preparing a sermon for Sunday next, wherein I hope to be able to point the moral of the life of this excellent man, the best friend I ever knew.

J. HALPIN, R.N.,
Hampstead.

Sept. 21, 1759.

EPILOGUE

AUSTRALIA.

CHAPTER L. (AND LAST.)

WHEREIN THE SLACK OF THE AUSTRALIAN LINE IS HAULED IN.

Blake Rous in due time married Annie Hatherley, and took up a new station in the back country, removing thither such of the household gods as had fallen to his share, after fair division, of what had been saved from the great fire of Black Thursday.

That Blake never had reason to regret his choice I am well assured, and a happier or better-ordered home was not to be found in the district.

Miss Dorothy married a scion of nobility, who chose to sink his identity under the "cabbage-tree" of a Queensland squatter; and Sylvia, after performing her duty to her father up to the year 1854, found herself at liberty after his death, to join her fortunes to those of a gentleman who had evidenced his love and fidelity during five long years of troublous expectation, through "bad seasons and good."

Him she married, and with him went out to brave the world and give hostages to fortune in Western Australia.

At the present day one of her sons is a leading squatter in Riverina, while another is following pastoral pursuits in what is now known as the Northern Territory of South Australia, but I wish to add that the eldest son of Blake, who went "Home" and obtained a naval cadetship, passing in seamanship aboard the "Britannia," and in gunnery aboard the "Excellent," is now wearing his first pair of "wings" as sub-lieu-

tenant in one of the ships of the squadron on the Australian station.

Thus has the dream of Mr. Daniel Defoe been more than realized, and thus have some of the fondest aspirations of the "Ancestor" been fulfilled.

The descendants of Nicholas John Rous (more commonly known in his own day as John Rous) have actually helped to colonize the great southern continent, and one of them to-day assists to uphold the honour of the Royal Navy in Australian waters.

.

Such of the old books and old-world treasures as survived the great fire, were divided and distributed among the members of the Rous family on the old home being broken up.

Miss Sylvia (be it known) got the original edition of "Robinson Crusoe," with Mr. Defoe's honoured autograph on the title-page, and the 1599 edition of "The Travels of Marco Polo," besides one solitary volume of "Dampier's Voyages," which had narrowly escaped sharing the fate of its fellow in the fire.

Blake has the Torres and the Tasman, which completes the brief catalogue of the remains of "Man o' War Rous's" library.

Dorothy, as direct descendant and namesake, has the unique collar and earrings of pearls worn ages ago by the witty and beautiful Dame Dorothy Trumpington.

When I say this, I say nearly all; but few as these relics be, they bear their own special significance. They are truly as so many golden links in the chain that binds their happy possessors to a glorious past, wherein their ancestors shone more or less conspicuously.

To emulate that past in the present and the future has ever been their fixed aim, and if circumstances have not combined to enable them to eclipse nor even to equal the deeds of the days that are gone, it is a well-established fact that they have in no wise disgraced their traditions.

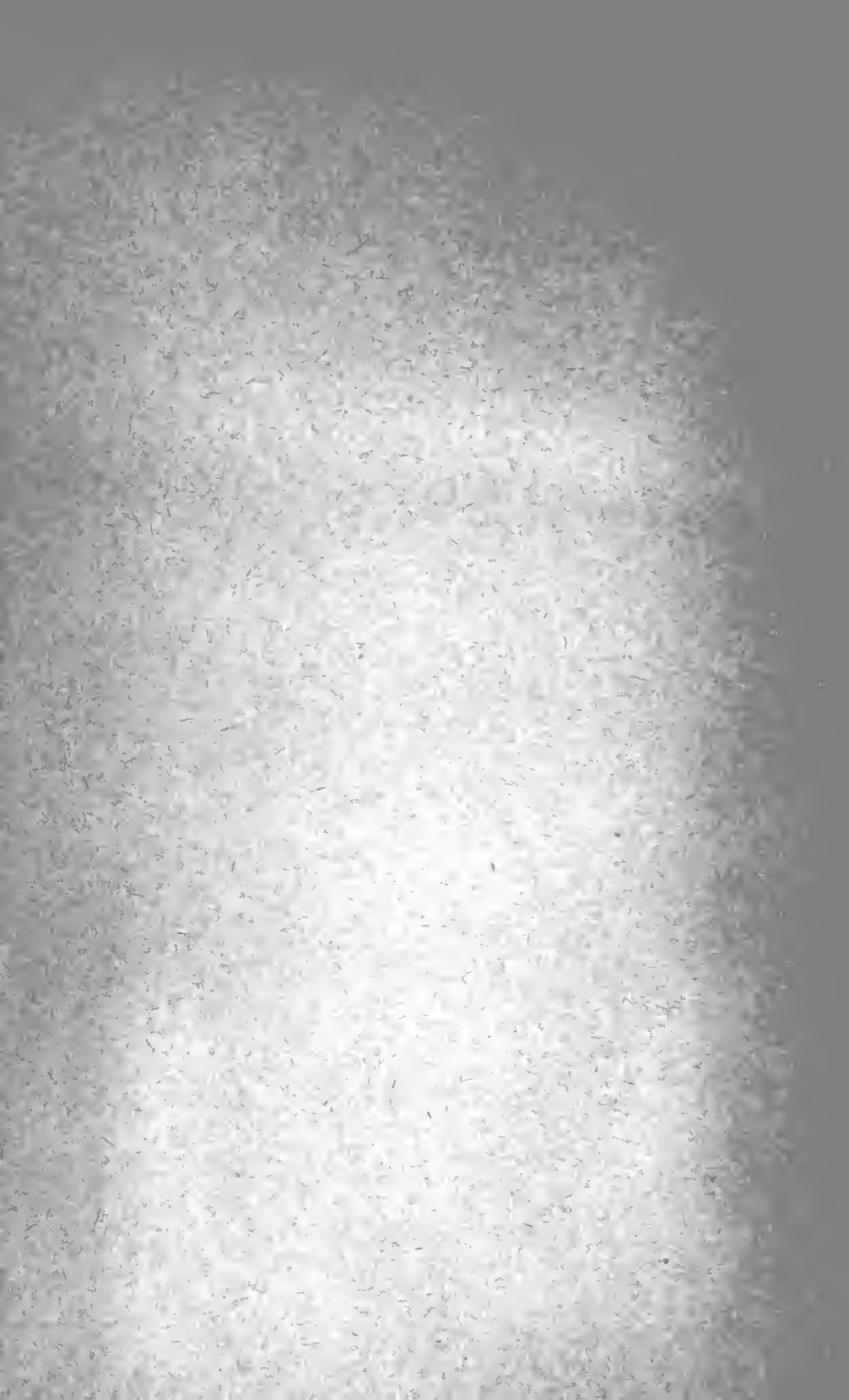
"It has been a saying amongst us ever since I can remember," said Miss Sylvia to Vincent on a former occasion, "that there has ever been a Rous in the Royal Navy, and it shall be our care that the Navy shall never lack for want of one."

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Vincent still survives, hale and hearty, though old in point of years.

I can never forget that it was through him that I first came to be acquainted with the story of the Rous family, and enjoyed the privilege of reading his faithful transcript of the yellow-leaved volume, partially consumed (afterwards) along with so many other family treasures in the great fire on "Black Thursday."

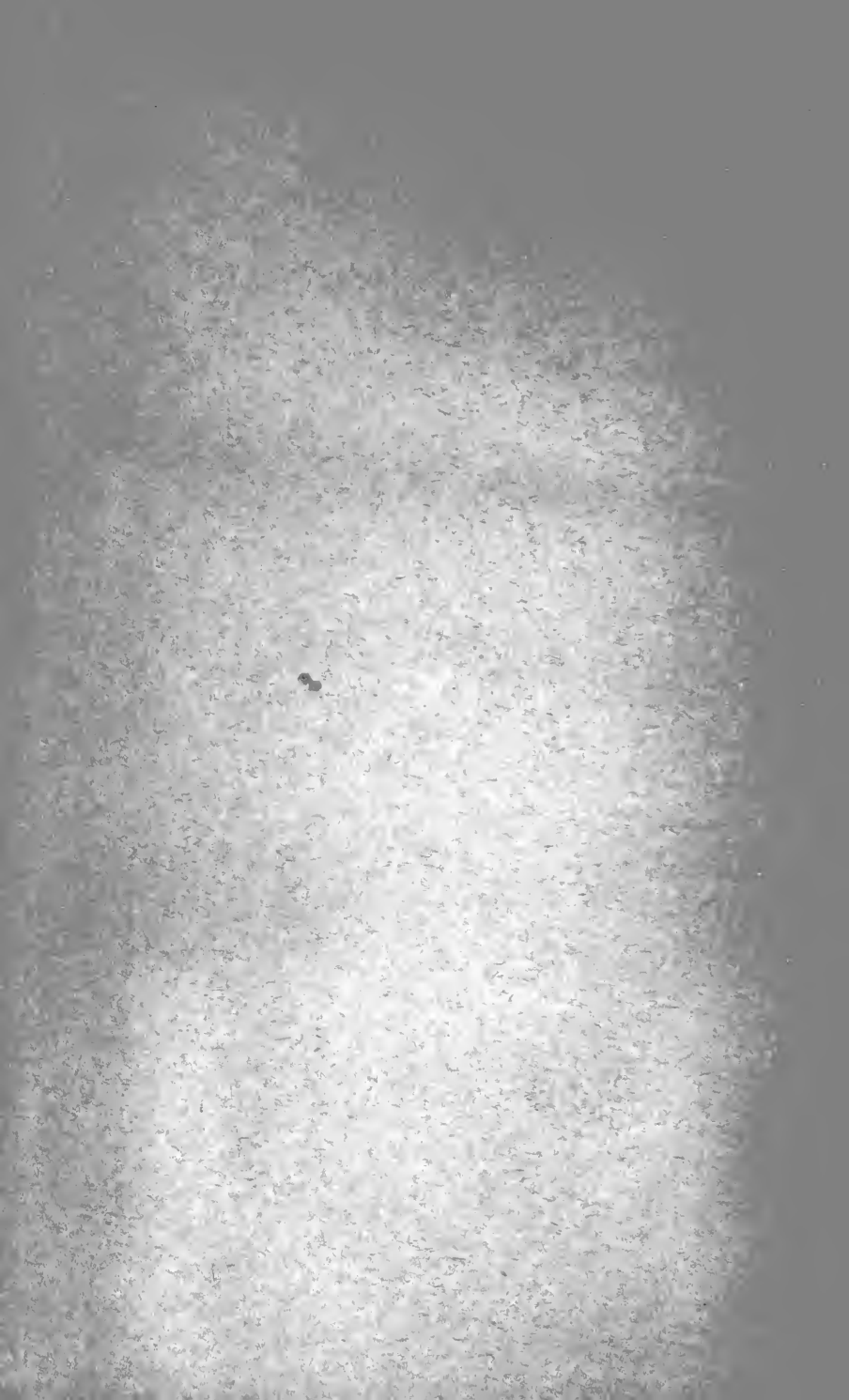
THE END.



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